SUMMARY

Studies of Marlowe's Tamburlaine invariably point to the apparent lack of unity in a play which appears to be but a series of loosely-connected episodes. By analysing the religious content of this drama, this study attempts to show how religious elements to some extent define the hero, explain the nature and the areas of dramatic tension and provide principles of coherence for the play as a whole. Various aspects are examined.

A comparison of the historical background of Timur with the legendary accounts of Tamerlane's career shows how chroniclers seem to have freed Timur from Moslem traits and to have invested him instead with religious ones more appealing to Christian admirers. However, Marlowe recreates a Moslem setting for his hero. An analysis of the Moslem content of the play reveals how the dramatist has associated idolatrous connotations, mostly drawn from the Bible, with the Moslem practices of the Turks. Thus, the idolatrous character of the Turks, which Marlowe carefully preserves throughout the play, forms the basis of the dramatic tension. The Turks deserve to be destroyed by the scourging Tamburlaine.

Meanwhile, Marlowe develops a twofold image of his hero. The worldly aims, the religion of war, and the self-deifying pursuits of the pagan Tamburlaine match those of the Moslem and posthumously idealized Mahomet. At the same time, Tamburlaine accomplishes his mission as a scourge by defeating the Turkish Bajazet and his Turkish generals. As a climax to his scourging activities, Tamburlaine challenges his spiritual rival Mahomet by destroying his image as a god and by symbolically burning the Koran. The pagan character of Tamburlaine and his divine mission as scourge become reconcilable and meaningful only when his career is studied in reference to the careers of Biblical scourges. Material gleaned from a close comparison of Marlowe's text with the texts and notes of the 1560 Geneva Bible and the 1572 revised edition of the Bishops version brings out the similarities between Tamburlaine and Biblical tyrants like Sennacherib, Nabuchadnezzar, and Cyrus. Driven by pride and ambition, these tyrants wage relentless wars and, at the same time, act as special instruments of God. Elizabethans, familiar with the Biblical text, would have detected these implied similarities. Religious elements thus define the hero and suggest the framework which provides coherent unity.

This study leaves much yet to be examined. It does not attempt to solve any of the problems of scholarship which beset the Marlovian student but deals mainly with the ideas in the play. It does not even pretend to be exhaustive in the areas explored. The exact religious function of the array of mythological gods and of the many natural phenomena referred to, as well as the literary and dramatic devices used by Marlowe to convey these ideas, all stand in need of careful scrutiny in order that the place and content of the religious elements in Tamburlaine be fully analysed.

RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS IN MARLOWE'S 'TAMBURLAINE'

by

FLORESTINE AUDETTE

THESIS

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

MARCH 1979

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1. The Place of Religion in the Elizabethan World 1
2. Justifications for the Use of This Approach in the Study of Tamburlaine 12
3. The Elizabethan English Bibles 24
4. Plan of the Thesis 28
5. Editions Used 30

Chapter 1. The Elizabethan World and the Tamerlane-Myth

1. Introduction 32
2. The Elizabethan Image of the Moslem World 37
3. Tamburlaine, a Moslem Character 46
4. Timur, the Historical Character 52
5. The Tamerlane-Myth 86
6. The Tamerlane-Lore 126
7. Conclusion 137

Chapter 2. Moslem Elements in 'Tamburlaine the Great'

1. Introduction 139
2. Moslem Elements Centred on Mahomet 145
   a) Mahomet, the Man 147
   b) The Posthumous Idealized Image of Mahomet 181
3. Moslem Elements Centred on the Koran 204
4. The Moslem Tradition 210
   a) The Rise of the Tradition 211
   b) The Rise of Moslem Sects 213
5. Moslem Elements in the Play 223
6. Conclusion 238

Chapter 3. The Theme of Idolatry in 'Tamburlaine'

1. Introduction 241
2. The Significance of Idolatry for Elizabethans 243
3. Idolatry and the Turks 256
   a) Biblical Associations with Bajazet's and Tamburlaine's Armies 256
   b) Idolatrous Practices of the Turks 266
   c) Contemporary Associations with Idolatry 278
   d) Christ versus Mahomet and the Gods 290

4. Mahomet, the Idol 302

a) Mahomet in the Medieval Literary Tradition 303
b) Mahomet and the Biblical Idols 306
c) Tamburlaine and the God Mahomet 311
d) The Burning of the Koran 316
e) Tamburlaine's Conversion and Related Problems 336
f) The Vision of Mahomet 342

5. Conclusion 346

Chapter 4. Tamburlaine's Religion of War

1. Introduction 349
2. Tamburlaine, the Self-Deified God of War 354
3. Tamburlaine's Ethics of War 377
4. Tamburlaine's Theories on War 396
5. Challenges Put to Tamburlaine's Ethics of War 406
6. Tamburlaine, the God of War in Action 417
7. Conclusion 442

Chapter 5. Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God - 1

1. Introduction 445

a) The Theme of the Scourge 448
b) Tamburlaine's God 460
c) The God-Jove Ambiguity 466

2. Prophetic Elements in Tamburlaine 473

a) Biblical Prophets 476
b) Tamburlaine, the Prophet 487

3. Tamburlaine, the Wrath of God 504

a) Description of the Wrath of God 505
b) Tamburlaine as the Wrath of God 513

4. Conclusion 518

Chapter 6. Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God - 2

1. Introduction 519
2. The God of Scourges and Tamburlaine, the Scourge 519
3. The Theme of Biblical Scourges and Tamburlaine 538
4. Tamburlaine and Biblical Scourges of the Elect Type 549
5. Tamburlaine and Biblical Tyrants Used as Scourges 562
6. The Destruction of Egypt and Babylon 577
7. The Problem of Tamburlaine's Cruelty 589
8. The Problem of Tamburlaine's Moral Guilt 607
9. Conclusion 625

Conclusion
1. Tamburlaine and the Moslem Elements in the Play 627
2. Tamburlaine and the Biblical Elements in the Play 629
3. Various Orthodoxies 633
4. The Tamburlaine-Panorama 634
5. Problems 638

List of Abbreviations 650

Bibliography 651

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Any sense of achievement, however modest, which may be derived from a pursuit of this nature must inevitably entail many debts of gratitude. Names are invariably associated in one's mind with tokens of kind interest from relative or friend, with the inspiring examples of the dedicated to the quest for truth and knowledge in the educational and academic worlds, and with timely advice of professionals. With respect to this particular study, thanks must be expressed to the Department of Education of the Province of Quebec, Canada, whose financial award made this investigation possible, to Professor G.K. Hunter who acted as supervisor during the initial research phase of this study, to Mr. Martin Wright, and, especially, to Professor J.R. Mulryne whose several pertinent suggestions were the cause of many improvements in the final stages of this work.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore the religious elements in Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine. The reasons for focusing the reader's attention more specifically on the religious rather than on the political, the dramatic, or even the literary elements in Marlowe's plays are many. So are the reasons for subjecting Tamburlaine, in preference to other Marlovian works, to this particular analytic approach. Marlowe lived in an age when religion, in one or other of its aspects, pervaded all levels of society and all areas of activity. The play first appeared on the stage towards the end of a decade which had witnessed its large share of upheavals and disturbing incidents, most of them being more or less bound up with religious implications of some sort.[1] Religious issues guided the individual in his private moral choices, swayed political forces, determined national policies and shaped various trends of thought in the academic world. No area of private, social, or academic life was free from the formative influence of religion.

Indeed, at this time, the Church of England was desperately trying to define a via media between an absolute authority symbolized by the papacy and a radical form of ethics inspired by the literal interpretation of the "Holy Writ".[2] Because forces from within as well as from without constantly threatened the yet precarious security of the Church, political leaders were obsessed with the fear that the Holy See, supported by the Catholic countries of Europe, might resume its former leadership and power in the ecclesiastical affairs of England. As a result, they easily perceived themselves as custodians, jealously guarding the political and

---

1. J. B. Steane qualifies these years as "a nervous decade", a period which saw the execution of the influential Edmund Campion in 1581, that of Mary Stuart in 1587, and the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588: see Marlowe: A Critical study (Cambridge, 1964), p. 12.

2. See Roy W. Battenhouse, Marlowe's 'Tamburlaine': A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy (Nashville, 1941), pp. 26 ff.

religious welfare of their country. For them, the first duty was to guarantee the security of their sovereign, the supreme authority of their Church and state. Within this context of fear, situations and events could acquire momentous proportions because of their implied links with Rome and, thereby, with the English Catholics. One such alarming situation was the presence of Mary Stuart on English soil.[3] Besides embodying a major threat to the crown, Mary's connections with the Catholic powers of Europe and, through these, with the papacy were a constant source of anxiety for the leaders of both Church and state. Another cause for alarm was the increasing stream of Roman clergy and Jesuit priests returning to England after a period of intensive training in the English College in Rome or until 1577/8 in the English Seminary of Douai and, subsequently, of Rheims.[4] These priests, welcomed by the English Catholics, enjoyed an extraordinary success in their clandestine pastoral work among their fellow-countrymen. The presence and influence of unusually gifted men like Edmund Campion and Robert Parsons could not be ignored.[5] Mark Eccles mentions that "to the ordinary Englishman, for whom Marlowe was writing, the seminarists of Douai and Rheims seemed an ever-threatening danger second only to that of the invasion by the Armada".[6] Fears for the crown, and fears of encroachments by the papacy upon the ecclesiastical authority of the sovereign in the Church of England, came to a head with the discovery of the Babington Plot in 1586. In this plot, Jesuits were alleged to have supported the plan to assassinate Elizabeth in favour of Mary Stuart.[7] The English government

---

3. For the significance of Mary's presence in England during this period, see J. E. Neale, Queen Elizabeth (London, 1934), ch. 16, pp. 257-282.

4. See Mark Eccles, Christopher Marlowe in London (Cambridge, Mass., 1934), ch. 7, pp. 128-144. See also Frederick S. Boas, Christopher Marlowe: A Biographical and Critical Study (Oxford, 1940), pp. 26-27.

5. See Neale, op. cit., n. 3, pp. 249 ff.

6. See Eccles, op. cit., n. 4, p. 144.

7. See Neale, op. cit., n. 3, pp. 271 ff.

eliminated one source of anxiety by executing Mary early in 1587.[8] As for the Jesuits, the careful surveillance of their work and whereabouts, which had already been exercised since the beginning of the decade,[9] was considerably intensified. The arrest of these priests became the main objective of an extensive spying system planned and directed by the Secretary of State. By extending the spying network to the Continent, even within the walls of Jesuit training centres, Sir Francis Walsingham hoped to facilitate the identification and arrest of these priests as soon as possible after their secret return to the English shores.[10] Marlowe, it is strongly suspected, became an active agent of this spying network in 1587[11] and was thus caught up at the very centre of the cross-currents of Elizabethan politics and religion. In such a position, he could not have remained detached from situations in which the conflict between religious allegiances and loyalty to the crown spelt tragedy for so many.

If religious issues could determine national policies, their place in the intellectual world could hardly be exaggerated. Indeed, they were the cause of much of the strife and debate which agitated the world of Renaissance learning, a strife which also exacted its toll of victims and casualties. In fact, the intellectual upheavals brought about by the clash of new ideas with the old drew most of its momentum from the religious implications involved. The Renaissance intellectual elite was beginning to liberate itself from structures and patterns of thought inherited from a long-standing tradition of scholarship. In the course of this process, no discipline was immune from the disturbing experience of being reassessed.

---

8. See ibid., pp. 279-280.

9. In 1581, a proclamation was issued by the Queen recalling her Majesty's subjects living abroad under the pretence of studies. This was aimed at the priests studying in Europe. See Steane, op. cit., n. 1, p. 12.

10. Steane mentions that the presence of English Catholics at home and abroad was one of Walsingham's first cares: see ibid.
See also Neale, op. cit., n. 3, pp. 252 ff.; Boas, op. cit., n. 4, p. 27.

11. See Boas, op. cit., n. 4, p. 27.

Theologians of the new generation were reluctant to allow themselves to be indoctrinated with the large corpus of dogmas which the Roman Church had cumulated through the centuries. They looked more and more to the Holy Scriptures, enlightened by the use of reason, for guidance in the elaboration of a system of ethics whose chief purpose was to ensure the existence of a stable order both for the nation and for the individual.[12] This order, a prime concern for which the crown assumed the responsibility, was to see itself challenged from many sides, by conflicts within the religious ranks as well as by external pressures.

Philosophers rejected out-of-date scholasticism, an offshoot of traditional Aristotelianism grafted onto Christianity. Dialecticians discounted conclusions reached by a reason closed in upon itself, as these were used by the adherents to the scholastic system of learning. The interests of the intellectual elite were opening onto the material world in which investigations were conducted according to scientific principles. Henceforth, instead of being blindly accepted on the strength of the authority proposing them,[13] truths had to be reconciled with facts gained from experience. By asserting the simultaneous truth or the "double truth" of the apparently contradictory propositions of faith and reason, influential Paduan philosophers like the Neo-Aristotelian Pomponazzi, were rocking the foundations of traditional learning. The consequences were shattering. Phenomena of nature were explained only in terms of material cause and effect. Pomponazzi's world-machine ruled out the need of a divine Providence presiding over creation, man and nature. In this perspective, the concept of the existence of God and the scholastic proofs of this

---

12. For the influence of humanism on Elizabethan religious thought, see Battenhouse, op. cit., n. 2, pp. 21-50.

13. See ibid., p. 54. However, William T. Costello holds an opposite view. He claims that seventeenth-century Cambridge was intensely devoted to Aristotle's ethics as a system to replace the final Catholic teaching authority. See The Scholastic Curriculum at Early Seventeenth-Century Cambridge (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), p. 64. See also ibid., pp. 9 ff.

existence became irrelevant.[14] Debates on questions of this nature held the attention of university wits[15] and of learned men like the members of the "School of Night" grouped around Sir Walter Ralegh.[16] In fact, the activities of this group were for some a cause of deep concern for the future of Christianity in England.[17] Propositions put forth by Ralegh and his coterie were easily seen as threats to the social and moral order which the Elizabethan authorities were trying to establish. Because the preservation of this order was identified with the mission of the Church of England, threats of this nature were understood as attacks on religion and, therefore, were readily categorized as "atheistic" opinions.[18] Marlowe was one of these university wits from Cambridge who, it appears, later became associated with Ralegh's circle of friends.[19] Thus Marlowe seems to have been an immediate witness and participant in these discussions which challenged the very foundations of creed and thought. He can hardly have escaped the trying experience of having to choose between reaffirming his allegiance to the traditional tenets of faith or succumbing to the

---

14. For a study of Pomponazzi's theories and the disturbing influence they had, see Martin Pine, "Pomponazzi and the Problem of 'Double Truth'", JHI 29 (1968), pp. 163 - 176.

15. On the changing trends of education in Oxford and Cambridge during the sixteenth century, see M. H. Curtis, Oxford and Cambridge in Transition 1558-1642: An Essay on Changing Relations between the English Universities and English Society (Oxford, 1959), ch. 4, 8, 9. For Marlowe in Cambridge, see Philip Henderson, Christopher Marlowe (London, 1974 ed.), ch. 2, pp. 10-18.

16. For studies on "The School of Night" and Marlowe's involvement in it, see Paul H. Kocher, Christopher Marlowe: A Study of his Thought, Learning, and Character (New York, 1946), pp. 7-18; Henderson, op. cit., n. 15, pp. 35-54.

17. The Jesuit Robert Parsons, in his Responsio ad Elizabethae Edictum, expresses his fears that Ralegh and his atheists will gain too much influence at the expense of orthodox beliefs and ethics and thus seriously jeopardize the future of the traditional faith: see Henderson, op. cit., n. 15, p. 42.

18. Battenhouse explains the broad and inclusive meaning of the term "atheism" as it was used in the sixteenth century: see op. cit., n. 2, pp. 42 ff.

19. See above, n. 16.

fascinations of a secular learning newly emerging from this strife. Judith Weil notes that "all of his plays deal with obedience to bonds and promises, false and true".[20] This preoccupation could reflect the mental strain which possibly accompanied some moral choices he had to make, one of these perhaps being the decision to abandon his plans to join the Anglican clergy in favour of spying missions and all the moral issues these could entail. Thus Marlowe discussing in Cambridge, or debating with the other members of Ralegh's circle, or spying in the interests of the Queen, could not be oblivious to the trying tests now being imposed upon religious traditions in all sectors of his academic, social, and political worlds. How did Marlowe himself react to these situations?

Marlowe the man remains to this day the most controversial figure of the Elizabethan literary world. The mysterious and tragic circumstances of his death on 30th May 1593 have cast a gloom over every area of the life and work of the dramatist, a gloom which the enigmatic character of his plays have contributed little to dispel. No death has held the attention of so many scholars, preachers, and others to such an extraordinary degree. No biography of so short a life has led to wilder speculations about the man, his beliefs, and his behaviour.[21] Rumours of recusancy dogged the "atheistic" Marlowe both at the beginning of his career and at the end of his life. Gossips supposed that Marlowe was absent from Corpus Christi College in 1587 because he had escaped to Rheims to join the Roman clergy there.[22] Later, Thomas Kyd's letters addressed to Sir John Puckering, the Lord Keeper, after the death of Marlowe, tell of the latter's plans to join the King of Scotland, as his friend Matthew Roydon had already

---

20. Judith Weil, Christopher Marlowe: Merlin's Prophet (London, 1977) p. 121.

21. See Steane, op. cit., n. 1, pp. 3 ff.

22. See Boas, op. cit., n. 4, p. 27; Steane, op. cit., n. 1, pp. 11-12; Henderson, op. cit., n. 15, ch. 3, pp. 19-27.

done.[23] The reasons motivating Marlowe to make a move of this kind, if this report is true, could be many. They do not exclude the possibility that he hoped eventually to transfer his allegiances from Protestantism to Catholicism. Besides having the reputation of being partial to learned men, James's support was eagerly sought for by Catholic countries of Europe who hoped to form an alliance with him against Protestant England.[24] Whatever Marlowe's motives were, an initiative of this nature could bring about charges of political treason upon him precisely because it could not be judged independently from the Catholic connections which it implied.

On the other hand, contemporary testimonies, especially those of Richard Baines[25] and Thomas Kyd,[26] have associated Marlowe, the Cambridge scholar once destined to the Holy Orders, with the authorship of atheistic treatises and with "monstrous opinions" of the most infamous sort. The shady reputation of Baines and the trying circumstances under which Kyd wrote his letters could argue against the authenticity of these allegations. However, the similarities in content as well as the differences in form are too great to suspect that these testimonies were concerted. Each supports the other and rules out the possibility of discounting altogether the authenticity of these allegations.[27] These reports, in addition to several other testimonies, suggest the kind of reputation Marlowe had among his contemporaries.

Paul H. Kocher has systematically analysed Baines's report;[28] it must

---

23. See Steane, op. cit., n. 1, p. 8; Henderson, op. cit., n. 15, p. 61; Kocher, op. cit., n. 16, p. 179.

24. For the incident of the "Spanish Blanks" in 1593 and its implications, see Pierre Lefranc, Sir Walter Ralegh, écrivain: l'oeuvre et les idées (Paris, 1968), pp. 368-369.

25. For the text of the Baines Report, see Kocher, op. cit., n. 16, pp. 34-36; Steane, op. cit., n. 1, pp. 363-364.

26. For Kyd's testimony against Marlowe, see Kocher, op. cit., n. 16, pp. 24-28.

27. See ibid., pp. 27-32.

28. See ibid., pp. 33-66.

be noted that all but two of the propositions it contains deal with religious matters, mostly of a Biblical nature. They are mainly a series of attacks on the theological version of the early history of mankind, of scoffs at Christ, of criticisms of Christian religion, and of statements about Marlowe's atheistic proselytizing.[29] Kyd's letters support Baines's accusations. The conclusion is that whether Marlowe was for or against religion as it was practised in his day, religious elements were undeniably among his preoccupations and interests. Their degree of importance may be measured against the risks he was taking in expressing his views so outrageously. Charges of treason and sentence to death could be the penalty impending upon him. T. S. Eliot has described Marlowe as "the most thoughtful, the most blasphemous (and therefore, probably, the most Christian) of his contemporaries".[30] Paradox seems to be the essence of Marlowe's nature.

One may assume that the author of these "monstrous opinions" undeniably had full knowledge of the points he was attacking. His religious training had spanned several years. As a scholar of King's School in Canterbury and a probable member of the cathedral choir,[31] he probably had sung in church services regularly. In Biblical terms, this means that in the course of each month, besides listening to other scriptural readings chosen for the services, Marlowe had been exposed to the poetic beauty of the complete Book of Psalms. From his boyhood on until the end of his academic career and perhaps later on as well, compulsory church attendance[32]

---

29. Kocher summarizes thus the contents of the Baines Report: see ibid., p. 36.

30. Quoted in Henderson, op. cit., n. 15, p. 65, n. 2.

31. On Marlowe as a King's scholar in Canterbury and the privileges and prerequisites attached to the scholarship, see A. D. Wraight and Virginia F. Stern, In Search of Christopher Marlowe: A Pictorial Biography (London, 1965), p. 40. See also Boas, op. cit., n. 4, pp. 6-9.

32. Thomas Watson's name, possibly that of the poet involved with Marlowe in the Bradley Affair, appears in a list sent to William Burghley of names of strangers who do not go to church. The list is dated 24 June 1581: see Eccles, op. cit., n. 4, p. 158. Thomas Watson was perhaps identified as a stranger because of his former travels and sojourns on the Continent, in Douai in particular. Church attendance was subject

cont'd./

had ensured his familiarity with the Holy Scriptures. Readings, as they were assigned for each day, guaranteed that the Old Testament would be read once a year and the New Testament at least three times a year.[33] Gifted as he was, Marlowe could assimilate a good part of the Bible without even opening the book himself. Besides listening to these scriptural readings in the course of church services, church attendance had forced him to bear out numerous sermons, often lengthy and systematic, both in Canterbury and in Cambridge.[34] Should Marlowe's diligence and attentiveness have been but a shadow of that of Simon d'Ewes, another Cambridge scholar,[35] Marlowe could still have absorbed a considerable amount of knowledge of a religious nature.[36] Furthermore, the university was the scene of numerous prescribed

---

Footnote 32 cont'd./
to control, even in London. For the Bradley Affair, see ibid. ch. 2, pp. 32-42 and Boas, op. cit., n. 4, pp. 101-107.

33. See Weil, op. cit., n. 20, p. 178, n. 9.

34. Sermons were considered an important part of Cambridge education at this time. Attendance was obligatory and the practice of the students was to take down the preacher's discourse word-for-word. Thanks to this practice, early seventeenth-century sermons are still coming to light. See Costello, op. cit., n. 13, p. 34. One may assume that, if such was the practice in an age when learning was already undergoing the process of secularization, Marlowe probably underwent a similar kind of training a few decades earlier when the scholastic tradition was still holding its position to some extent against the pressures challenging it.

35. Summarizing sermons or "diting of sermons", as it was called, was a practice almost universal in early seventeenth-century Cambridge. Simon d'Ewes records in his autobiography in 1618 that he had heard three sermons in one day and then had spent the evening enlarging and correcting the notes of the afternoon sermon. And yet, he was destined to be a lawyer. See ibid., p. 111.

36. Costello mentions that theology was the all-important study because the issues of man's salvation were central to that discipline. Furthermore, on its basis, governments were formed, academic positions were filled, and sometimes blood was spilled. He adds that "no historian of the seventeenth century can afford to ignore the paramountcy of theology in university life, much less dare he minimize the issues": ibid., p. 107. Next to ethics, theology occupies the largest space in notebooks. If copies and summaries of sermons are included, it occupies the largest place: see ibid., p. 110. See also below, p. 10, n. 37.

academic disputations, often held on topics religious or related to religion.[37] In addition to this, the fact that Marlowe was destined to the Holy Orders, the basis upon which he had been awarded a Parker scholarship for his first degree and had had it renewed for another three years,[38] meant that the emphasis of his training probably lay on the study of divinity. William T. Costello judges that the amount of theology which a student could absorb in the first four years of study leading towards a first degree was already considerable.[39] Finally, should Marlowe's years of training have been concluded by a personal experience, in the course of his spying mission, of the intense spiritual and doctrinal preparation which the seminarists in Rheims underwent before returning to England, who would dare assess the response, positive or negative, that religion possibly elicited from the intelligent and sensitive poet?

The image of the Cambridge Marlowe appears to be quite different from the one emerging from the testimonies mentioned above. One may assume that, since his Parker scholarship was renewed apparently without any difficulty, Marlowe's general performance in college must not have fallen under any severe censure from the university authorities.[40] If these made difficulties

---

37. Emmanuel College decreed that there should be a theological disputation every week to which scholars should attend: see Costello, op. cit, n. 13, p. 110. Sermons were also answered. Costello adds that it would be difficult "to conceive how a student could have listened to such disputes and ordinary sermons for four years without acquiring a systematic knowledge of divinity": ibid., p. 112. Divinity disputations were the "acme" of school exercises to which the undergraduates attended: see ibid. These disputations could be on grace, justification, free will, ministry, papacy, Eucharist, after-life, cult of sacred images, and other topics: see ibid., p. 113. Costello notes how James Bass Mullinger has misunderstood the place and importance of divinity in Cambridge as his history of Cambridge shows: see ibid., p. 110.

38. See Boas, op. cit., n. 4, pp. 11, 15 and 19-20.

39. See above, n. 37.

40. See Boas, op. cit., n. 4, p. 21.

about conferring a master's degree upon him on the basis of his absenteeism and of the rumours that circulated about his interests in Rheims,[41] one may suppose that these authorities might have made similar difficulties long before should his "monstrous opinions" have come to light then as they did later. The more one tries to resolve the riddles in Marlowe's life, the more obscure the Marlowe-enigma appears to be. Nevertheless, it seems illogical to pretend that all this religious training and experience, whether he accepted or rejected it, had not left its indelible mark upon the mind and soul of Marlowe, the dramatist. To hold a contrary opinion would seem unrealistic. Furthermore, if religion held so prominent a place in the early years of the Elizabethan Marlowe, in the training he underwent in Canterbury and in Cambridge; if religious issues provided the motives for his spying mission and the risks he had to take; if the evil repute which has stuck to his name to this day stems from his attacks on tenets of faith, should we readily assume that his dramatic creations, themselves mirrors of life situations, were the only area of his activity remaining untouched by religious elements of one form or another? Perhaps his poetic creations were havens, temporarily shielding him from the pressures which religion seemed to create around and for him. Nevertheless, one cannot discard the possibility that the prolonged concern for, or exposure to, religion had left a residue of thought patterns in the mind of Marlowe upon which, consciously and possibly unconsciously, he structured in part or in whole the framework of his plays. W. Moelwyn Merchant cautions the reader against the pitfall of identifying the moral image of Marlowe, the man and dramatist, completely with that created by the testimonies against him.[42] The fact that Marlowe is reputed to have died swearing does not

---

41. See ibid., pp. 21-27.

42. W. Moelwyn Merchant, "Marlowe the Orthodox" in Brian Morris, ed., Christopher Marlowe. Mermaid Critical Commentaries (London, 1968), pp. 179-181.

invalidate "the correctness of his beliefs".[43] The outward expression of one's beliefs does not necessarily coincide with the innermost allegiances of the speaker. Marlowe, the literary artist who persistently coined "dark conceits" carrying several levels of meanings at the same time, was possibly at one with Marlowe the man on this score. Furthermore, if so much attention has been given to Marlowe's religious opinions as they are recorded in the testimonies mentioned above, the authorship of which raises many questions, might it not seem logical to give as much attention to the religious elements in his plays, the authorship of which is beyond doubt for most of his work?

This study proposes to examine and analyse some religious elements in Tamburlaine, Parts I and II. The reasons for choosing this play can be justified in many ways. Firstly, the play enjoyed an overwhelming success. Frederick S. Boas says that, while Marlowe's Tamburlaine and Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy were "the two most epoch-making of pre-Shakespearian plays",[44] Marlowe's play "took Elizabethan theatre-goers by storm".[45] It was to revolutionize the dramatic form of English plays to a large extent. Secondly, this play was written by the young scholar about to leave or having just left Cambridge, by the colourful Marlowe who had managed to draw upon himself the attention of the Church, of professional scholars, of the Privy Council, and of patrons of learning. Thirdly, if the play met with so resounding a success, possibly it reflected the interests, the preoccupations and, perhaps, the fears of the Elizabethan audiences who applauded it. As religious questions were never far from any Elizabethan scene, one may suppose them to play their part in this drama in some form or other.

---

43. Ibid., p. 181.

44. Boas, op. cit., n. 4, p. 69.

45. Ibid., p. 79

invalidate "the correctness of his beliefs".[43] The outward expression of one's beliefs does not necessarily coincide with the innermost allegiances of the speaker. Marlowe, the literary artist who persistently coined "dark conceits" carrying several levels of meanings at the same time, was possibly at one with Marlowe the man on this score. Furthermore, if so much attention has been given to Marlowe's religious opinions as they are recorded in the testimonies mentioned above, the authorship of which raises many questions, might it not seem logical to give as much attention to the religious elements in his plays, the authorship of which is beyond doubt for most of his work?

This study proposes to examine and analyse some religious elements in Tamburlaine, Parts I and II. The reasons for choosing this play can be justified in many ways. Firstly, the play enjoyed an overwhelming success. Frederick S. Boas says that, while Marlowe's Tamburlaine and Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy were "the two most epoch-making of pre-Shakespearian plays",[44] Marlowe's play "took Elizabethan theatre-goers by storm".[45] It was to revolutionize the dramatic form of English plays to a large extent. Secondly, this play was written by the young scholar about to leave or having just left Cambridge, by the colourful Marlowe who had managed to draw upon himself the attention of the Church, of professional scholars, of the Privy Council, and of patrons of learning. Thirdly, if the play met with so resounding a success, possibly it reflected the interests, the preoccupations and, perhaps, the fears of the Elizabethan audiences who applauded it. As religious questions were never far from any Elizabethan scene, one may suppose them to play their part in this drama in some form or other.

---

43. Ibid., p. 181.

44. Boas, op. cit., n. 4, p. 69.

45. Ibid., p. 79

The difficulty of finding a core of integration for all the parts of the play is another major reason enticing the student to examine Tamburlaine from this angle. All of Marlowe's plays are puzzling enigmas, each representing a world of its own, each being built into a particular dramatic structure different from that of the other plays, all of them illustrating various forms of experiments of theatre.[46] Marlowe's canon is one of "extraordinarily diverse works".[47] Tamburlaine, for various reasons, has especially been put through the analytic mill by a wide variety of critics representing a broad range of approaches, each with its particular merits. The main points of some of these studies are outlined below in their order of appearance on the scene of Marlovian scholarship.

Roy W. Battenhouse was the first Marlovian scholar to concentrate on the theme of the Scourge of God in the play. After describing the Elizabethan's concern about the need for a system of moral philosophy which would ensure order and balance, Battenhouse defines the missions of the poet and of the historian as well as the place of Nature in such a system. The poet reveals the Divine Will; the historian records events as manifestations of the Divine Will; Nature is the mirror of God. All things become symbols or signs. History shows God as the principal actor, punishing or rewarding through the agency of scourges.[48] In this perspective, Marlowe's play is a pageant or a series of morality episodes, scenes, or emblems, "like jewels set in a fabric",[49] each conveying its own morality element. According to Battenhouse, the play has no plot in the modern sense of the word.[50] The theme of ambition is central to the play;[51] the theme of the Scourge

---

46. See James L. Smith, " The Jew of Malta in the Theatre" in Morris, ed. cit., n. 42, p. 27.

47. Ibid., p. 28.

48. See Battenhouse, op. cit., n. 2, pp. 15, 22, 36-37, 42, and 124-126.

49. Ibid., p. 150.

50. See ibid.

51. See ibid., p. 15.

of God defines the role and the destiny of Tamburlaine and provides an element of unity, the only one in the play, to the portrait of the hero.[52] Several scenes or emblems are studied but little effort is made to show how each relates to the others dramatically. In the words of J. B. Steane, Battenhouse's approach presents Tamburlaine as "a didactic play which conforms to a conventional morality".[53]

Kocher belongs to the romantic school of Marlovian criticism where traits of the author are read into those of his heroes. He begins his study by a detailed analysis of the Baines Report and assumes that this report holds "the key to Marlowe's thought"[54] and attitudes to Christianity. As may be expected, the task of analysing the religious meaning in Tamburlaine becomes an "immensely difficult problem"[55] if the critic chooses to "hold fast to these clear ideas about Marlowe's crusade against Christianity"[56] drawn from the Baines Report. Kocher's analysis becomes a matter of fitting the religious content of the play within and against that of the Baines Report. Amid the worthy fruits of much scholarly research, Kocher is led to conclude that in the first part of the play, the religious ideas "revolve around two conceptions uttered by Tamburlaine himself",[57] that the law of nature bids him seek the crown and that he is, meanwhile, to act as a Scourge of God.[58] Throughout the two plays, Tamburlaine obeys to the ethics of a god of force and energy governing the universe and mankind.[59] After much effort spent in trying to explain contradictions and inconsistencies which inevitably emerge in large numbers if all the religious elements in the play must be drawn from the Baines Report and transposed

---

52. See ibid., p. 129.
53. Steane, op. cit., n. 1, p. 72.
54. Ibid., p. 341.
55. Kocher, op. cit., n. 16, p. 69.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., p. 70.
58. See ibid.
59. See ibid., p. 72.

into the Tamburlaine figure, Kocher reflects that "it is small wonder if Marlowe's plays give such a confused religious impression."[60] The cause of this state of affairs is thrown back onto the nature of the dramatist "which he was constantly projecting into the drama" being "itself in fundamental confusion".[61] The only element of unity "underlying all the diversity of the religious attitudes in both Tamburlaine plays" is "that God is a god of thunder".[62] He admits that the presence of this God permeates the two plays to such an extent that, in modern terms, they may be called "the least atheistic of plays".[63] If Kocher fails to explain the diversity of the religious elements in Tamburlaine adequately, his study, nevertheless, strongly emphasizes the fact that these elements merit their large share of attention on the part of Marlovian students.

To Philip Henderson, Tamburlaine represents the victory of the imagination over the material world, the heroic will that aspires to the divine.[64] According to this critic, throughout both parts of the play, Marlowe is constantly examining the various forms of beliefs. They are all wanting, not to say absurd. Henderson finds that Marlowe is confronting in his mind the concept of a divine principle of energy against the more conventional idea of God, a Father-figure sitting in heaven and principally engaged in scourging his naughty children. The critic grants that Tamburlaine must believe in some sort of God if he is to be his scourge but, nevertheless, he finds that the hero is increasingly sceptical about the power and even the existence of such a God. Consequently, Tamburlaine's attitude to this God is one of increasing insolence.[65] Henderson sees in Marlowe's

---

60. Ibid., p. 102.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.. p. 103.

64. See Henderson, op. cit., n. 15, p. 84.

65. See ibid.. p. 96.

Tamburlaine a Shavian trait in that characters interest the dramatist in as much as they represent "embodied ideas".[66] However, the critic fails to see any coherent plan in the Tamburlaine plays and agrees with Swinburne when he describes them as "the stormy monotony of Titanic truculence which blusters like a simoon through the noisy course of its ten fierce acts".[67] Thus, according to Henderson, the religious elements in the Tamburlaine plays do not form a coherent body nor is there any element of unity in the play.

Frank B. Fieler explains how Marlowe displays "technical virtuosity" in order that the audience may be induced into accepting his "glorious villain" Tamburlaine despite his behaviour running counter to Elizabethan standards of ethics.[68] Fieler demonstrates how Marlowe provokes a constant interaction between the play and the audience.[69] According to Fieler, the dramatist deliberately manoeuvres the latter into responses favourable to the hero whenever Tamburlaine tends to alienate their sympathy from himself by his cruelty. Thus, through sheer skill as a playwright, Marlowe incites the audience to accept Tamburlaine's deeds no matter how revolting these may have appeared to his Elizabethan contemporaries. Fieler goes so far as to say that Marlowe is the first to "have attempted to stage the morally disturbing paradox of a glorious villain seriously contemplated".[70] Thus, Fieler relies heavily on factors external to the play, that is, on audience responses as the means to reduce the impact of the discrepancies between the cruelty of the villain and the glory of the hero, between the deeds of Tamburlaine on the stage and the conventional ethics which he flouts.

---

66. See ibid., p. 145.

67. Quoted in ibid., p. 147.

68. See Frank B. Fieler, Tamburlaine, Parts I and Its Audience (University of Florida Monographs, Humanities, No. 8, 1961), pp. 5-6.

69. See ibid.

70. Ibid., p. 6.

Steane finds Tamburlaine to be "the most solid and unflawed of Marlowe's plays: more consistent in quality than Dido or Faustus, more whole and substantial than the Jew of Malta, and more vigorous in imagination and sustaining power than Edward II".[71] He sees Marlowe as writing these plays in full confidence, assurance, and singleness of mind and purpose. However, Marlowe's singlenesses are only apparent. According to Steane, Marlowe's poetic powers inform a moral purpose which is evil when judged by Christian, humanitarian, and liberal standards. The play is an "unevenly-matched debate". The ringing speeches, the triumphant and sensational episodes of the hero are constantly undermined by a basic instability.[72] Throughout the play, Tamburlaine is on trial and is the subject of a debate. Judgment leans in his favour for the first seven scenes[73] after which Tamburlaine's position is questioned successively by the betrayed Cosroe, by Tamburlaine's own creed in nature, by Zenocrate's grief over the fate of Damascus, by the humiliations inflicted upon the apparently undeserving Bajazet and Zabina, by the behaviour of his own son Calyphas, by the virtues of Olympia, and by his own death.[74] Nevertheless, at the end of the first play, Tamburlaine is admired on his own terms and, at the end of the second part, he dies a great man, neither promoted to heaven nor disgraced into hell. Marlowe's imagination preserves the superior position of the hero with respect to the other characters of the play in spite of his traits and deeds which might be as repulsive to any audience as they are to certain characters in the play. The on-going debate within the play is deliberate on the part of the dramatist. Steane thinks that Marlowe and his hero are of the devil's party[75] and rules out

---

71. Steane, op. cit., n. 1, p. 62.
72. See ibid.
73. See ibid., p. 63.
74. See ibid., pp. 64 ff.
75. See ibid., pp. 75.

Battenhouse's idea that the play could be a moral and didactic drama.[76] Nevertheless, Steane concludes that "when all has been said, Tamburlaine must be recognized as in its extraordinary way fundamentally and deeply a religious work".[77] He adds: "God is the great unseen actor, felt increasingly as a force, and as of a nature undefined by any single religion that the world knows".[78] Tamburlaine is the scourge and the instrument of this God of war and beauty. Therefore, according to Steane, the play achieves a certain balance, not so much by the art of manipulating the audience into accepting the incompatibilities of the play but more by devices interwoven within the play. In spite of denying a moral purpose to Marlowe's drama, Steane has to recognize the unseen presence of the divine throughout the action of the play.

John D. Jump, in some ways, echoes Fieler's and Steane's assessments. He suggests that Marlowe has manipulated incidents taken from his sources, notably the treatment meted out to the Virgins of Damascus and their city, in such a way so as to "magnify our admiration for Tamburlaine and to minimize our pity for his victims".[79] He argues that "clearly, Marlowe's purpose is to prevent conventional moral judgments, and humanitarian and Christian feelings, from compromising the almost unbounded admiration that he wishes to excite for his hero's prowess".[80]

According to J. R. Mulryne and Stephen Fender, the disparity between the experiences of mind and those of feelings incited by the plays are the source of most of the critical disputes centring on Marlowe's works, on Tamburlaine in particular. The poetic imagination and its metaphors are

---

76. See ibid., pp. 75 ff.

77. Ibid., p. 114.

78. Ibid.

79. John D. Jump, ed., Tamburlaine the Great: Parts I and II (University of Nebraska, 1967), p. xviii.

80. Ibid.

at odds with the facts and, as a result, feelings are forced to oscillate baffled between the two kinds of experiences.[81] The appeal is rarely made to orthodox moral ideas and there does not appear "a comprehensive moral framework behind the action as a whole".[82] Consequently, the spectator or the reader must constantly search for ways of reconciling greatness with triviality, the glorious with the ridiculous, order with disorder, neither dominating or giving way to the other. "Each coexists with the other to produce in the audience a state of mind that is at once contradictory, yet profoundly true of thinking and feeling about the play's central topic, the fulfilment of the will".[83]

D. J. Palmer proceeds to prove that the natural order is the clue to Marlowe's art[84] while Merchant devotes an essay to Marlowe, the orthodox.[85]

Weil's analysis[86] is the most recent attempt to unravel the Marlovian enigma. She bases her study of Marlowe's plays upon Robert Greene's remark in his epistle to the reader prefixed to his Perimedes the Blacksmith published in 1588. Greene derides poets who "wantonlye set out such impious instances of intollerable poetrie, such mad and scoffing poets, that haue propheticall spirits, as bred of Merlins race".[87] She relates Greene's remark more to Marlowe than to the hero Tamburlaine and assumes that he is referring to the popular prophecies of Merlin[88] so prevalent in the sixteenth century according to the study made by Keith Thomas.[89] She sees Marlowe as

---

81. J. R. Mulryne and Stephen Fender, "Marlowe and the 'Comic Distance'" in Morris, ed. cit., n. 42, pp. 49-50.

82. Ibid., p. 56.

83. See ibid., pp. 53-54.

84. See D. J. Palmer, "Marlowe's Naturalism" in Morris, ed. cit., n. 42, pp. 151-175.

85. See Merchant, op. cit., n. 42, pp. 177-192.

86. See Weil, op. cit., n. 20, pp. 105-142.

87. See ibid., p. 3.

88. See ibid.

89. See Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England (London, 1971), pp. 113-151. See also Thomas's study on ancient prophecies: ibid., pp. 389-435.

another prophet of the wizard Merlin, delving in the dark arts of magic, of the magic of poetry in the case of Tamburlaine. In her estimation, Marlowe resorts to obscure language and dark conceits throughout his plays to mock his heroes and to expose their disorders of mind and spirit.[90] Her approach is based on the assumption that the role and place, never too obvious, of wisdom in the Biblical sense is an abiding preoccupation of the dramatist and that Marlowe's art consists in pointing to the folly of his characters.[91] Words, shows, and allusions are meant to mask reality, to deceive and undermine the visions of grandeur created by the hero. Parallels act as mirrors reflecting the truth about other characters and deeds. She describes Marlowe's plays as "unstable compounds of air and fire, ready to dissolve with each new translunary rapture"[92], having no substance of their own. Discrepancy between the imaginary world of poetry and reality is the main ingredient of tragic irony, Marlowe's favourite device. She applies this approach in her studies of all the plays of Marlowe with various degrees of success. Although she displays remarkable insights in her analysis of Tamburlaine, her method of approach does not seem to clarify this play as much as one would hope. She admits that the relation of Tamburlaine's affairs to folly differs from that of Barabas, Faustus and the Guise, that the dramatic technique used in Tamburlaine differs from that of the other three plays.[93] She observes that in the Tamburlaine plays, Marlowe "seems to have carefully dislodged the moral and intellectual foundations on which a dark satire might rest".[94] She takes Greene's remark literally when he accuses the "propheticall spirits" of having used a "mad and scoffing" style, "intollerable" to many, but she

---

90. See Weil, op. cit., n. 20, p. 2.

91. See ibid., p. 10.

92. Ibid., p. 5.

93. See ibid., p. 105.

94. Ibid.

finds that what is "especially baffling for any persistent student of the Tamburlaine plays is their combination of Christian allegory based, upon apocalyptic allusions, with tantalizing references to classical gods, heroes, and monsters".[95] She tries to fit the two plays into the whirlwind image borrowed from Erasmus's The Education of a Christian Prince[96] and sets the action in "a fictive space" which she calls "the land of fortune".[97] As a result, she is forced to conclude that Marlowe repeatedly presents Tamburlaine as a "paradox or a problem",[98] persistently trying to match reality with his extraordinary imagination, as Mulryne and Fender previously pointed out in their study. She likens Tamburlaine's pursuit to that inspired by the "dreaming prophecies" of Phyteus or Apollo;[99] Tamburlaine is thus doomed to a tragic end. Her method fails to solve the enigmatic character of Tamburlaine. In fact, she admits that "few characters so insistently impose upon us the sense that they are themselves riddles or puzzles".[100] According to her study, Tamburlaine dies after ten acts of dramatic action on the stage "leaving the audience to wonder whether he is a god, a devil or a man".[101] Although her analysis is enlightening in many ways, the contradictions, analogies and parallels have yet to be resolved around a core of dramatic unity. Weil admits that "it is surely a moot point whether the brunt of Greene's attack falls upon Marlowe or upon the poet-hero Tamburlaine as created by and distinct from Marlowe".[102] Still, she does not equate "Merlin"[103] with

---

95. Ibid.
96. Quoted in ibid.
97. See ibid.
98. Ibid., p. 125.
99. See ibid., p. 142.
100. Ibid., p. 107.
101. Ibid., p. 106.
102. Ibid., p. 3.
103. Boas notes at least thirteen different ways of spelling Marlowe's name, "Merlin" being one of them: see op. cit., n. 4, p. 1. Marlowe's name appears as "Marlin" thirteen times, as "Marlyn" three times, and as "Marlen" twice in the twenty-one entries in the accounts of Corpus Christi College for the period when Marlowe was studying there: see ibid., p. 13.

"Marlowe", as Greene probably did, neither does she identify Tamburlaine as one of those "propheticall spirits", possibly a Biblical type of false prophet. She is aware that Marlowe "wrote plays which mask their strong dependence upon the Bible and the commonplaces of Christian thought",[104] and yet, she barely touches upon the theme of the Scourge of God. As a result, Tamburlaine remains as much of a riddle at the end of her study as he was at the beginning.

These studies show that critics, to a large extent, have progressively liberated their minds from the dark image and reputation of the dramatist and have turned their attention rather on the plays themselves independently of what their author might have been. Secondly, critics resort no more to Marlowe's youth, inexperience, or negligence to explain the apparent deficiencies of his plays. Thirdly, Marlovian scholars have freed themselves from Battenhouse's assumptions that the play is a series of loosely connected scenes brought together without any purpose of fitting them into an overall coherent plan and that each scene is meant to convey its own message independently of that of the whole play as a unit. Fourthly, this survey shows that the contradictory elements of the play still challenge the student. Efforts are constantly being made to discover and analyse points and areas of interrelationships between what appear to be detached episodes. Scholars are trying to discover the pattern of the play which might yield its secret of coherence. Harold F. Brooks declares that "dramatic unity was as old in England as the great cyclic dramas"[105] and, therefore, supposes that Marlowe was as faithful to this tradition when he wrote his plays as he was in transmitting through them traits drawn from the classical and medieval dramatic heritage of his country.[106] While the elements of

---

104. Weil, op. cit., n. 20, p. 2.

105. Harold F. Brooks, "Marlowe and Early Shakespeare" in Morris, ed. cit., n. 42, p. 83.

106. See ibid., p. 80.

unity in Marlowe's plays might not be the strictly classical ones of action, time, and place, one might suppose that a man of his genius would not have ventured upon the task of creating his dramatic work without first isolating a central core of ideas around which he meant the action to revolve. Whether he wrote the second part of Tamburlaine as a sequel to the first, as is often believed, or whether he planned the ten acts as a dramatic unit, one would expect that in the process of writing, Marlowe was moulding his creation according to a pattern in which the diversified elements of his play would act as the constituents of a unified dramatic structure.

Furthermore, these studies, as well as Marlowe's religious background, point to the relevance of exploring the religious content of Tamburlaine. Scholars have repeatedly expressed the need for a systematic investigation into Marlowe's Biblical learning as a prerequisite to a clearer understanding of his works.[107] They repeatedly point to the necessity and value of assessing the Christian orthodox elements which might sustain and clarify the apparent maze of literary and dramatic devices he uses. One constantly suspects that what one reads or sees in Marlowe's play is part of a structure basically founded on elements of Christian orthodoxy. Is there the possibility that a better understanding of the religious elements in Tamburlaine might solve the dilemma of the dramatic unity of the play?

To find the answers to these two problems is the purpose of this study. The aims of this investigation are to isolate and analyse certain religious elements in Tamburlaine and to discover how these elements act as agents of coherence and sustain the play as a unified whole. The contradictory

---

107. Weil is the most recent scholar to recognize this need. She thinks she can consider Marlowe's notion of wisdom, as he uses this theme in his plays, only as eclectic and traditional until further studies have been made on Marlowe's own Biblical learning: see op. cit., n. 20, p. 10.

nature of the "religious elements" in the play forces one to take the term in its broadest sense, somewhat in the same way that one might discuss the "religious elements" of the Baines Report. One must remember, however, that the theme of the Scourge of God is an important one in Tamburlaine and that this theme is essentially a Biblical one. Consequently, one might expect the Biblical elements to play a much more important part in the play than has been recognized in the past. In fact, one might expect the importance of the Bible in the play possibly to reflect the importance it had for the Elizabethans in general, and for Marlowe in particular.. The days were past, it is true, when the "dominion of grace" propounded by the Scriptures constituted a threat to the power of the Church and state authorities.[108] Gone were also the days when scholars risked ending their lives at the stake for the simple misdeed of having translated the "Holy Writ" into the vernacular. Englishmen, nevertheless, could remember that William Tyndale had lost his life for this crime in 1536, only a few decades before Marlowe was born, and that others had barely escaped execution for similar reasons.[109] The survival of the English Bible through so painful a history should tell of the veneration the people had for it. Should this be questioned, one might recall that the first editions of the Bible in the vernacular were received with so much enthusiasm in the reign of Henry VIII that the crown had to legislate against the independent reading of it aloud in the church while services were in progress.[110]

---

108. See Peter Levi, The English Bible: 1534-1859 (London, 1974), pp. 14-15.

109. See ODCC, art. "Tyndale". Thomas Matthew, responsible for the Matthew Bible, was burnt at the stake as a Marian martyr in 1555: see F. F. Bruce, The English Bible: A History of Translations from the Earliest English Versions to the New English Bible (London, 1970), p. 64. Men who bought or sold Tyndale's Bible were threatened: sometimes they were tried for heresy and even put to death: see S. L. Greenslade, ed., The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day (Cambridge, 1963), p. 146.

110. See Bruce, op. cit., n. 109, pp. 68-69.

It is difficult to imagine that this enthusiasm had completely died down by the time Marlowe wrote his play. The history of the successive printings of the English Bibles denies this possiblity.[111] It is equally difficult to suppose that Marlowe was totally immune to the enthusiasm for the Scriptures displayed by his contemporaries. The contents of the Baines Report suggest the opposite.

The two most important editions of the Bible used in the reign of Elizabeth were the Geneva and Bishops versions. The first was the fruit of a high standard of scholarship and a great spirit of industry on the part of the Marian exiles living in Geneva. Under the direction of William Whittingham, a group of Biblical scholars produced what has been termed as the Geneva version of the Bible in 1560.[112] It would be difficult to assess the influence exercised by this Bible both on the language[113] and on the people in England during the reign of Elizabeth. Seventy editions of this version were printed during her reign,[114] over 120 between 1560, the date of its first appearance, and 1611, the year when the King James Authorized Version was printed.[115] This means that six editions of the Geneva Bible were printed for every one of the Bishops version. The Geneva Bible was principally a family Bible. Its small quarto size and its numerous notes made it particularly suitable for home use.[116] Nevertheless, for

---

111. See ibid., ch. 7, pp. 81 ff.

112. For the history of this translation of the Bible, see Bruce, op. cit., n. 109, pp. 87 ff.; Lloyd E. Berry, Introduction to The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition (Madison, 1969), pp. 5 ff.; Greenslade, ed. cit., n. 109, pp. 155 ff.

113. For the influence of this Bible and other English Bibles on the language, see Berry, op. cit., n. 112, pp. 17 ff.; Levi, op. cit., n. 108, pp. 11 ff.

114. See Bruce, op. cit., n. 109, p. 90.

115. The King James Authorized Version was designed to replace the Geneva Bible: see Berry, op. cit., n. 112, p. 14.

116. See Greenslade, ed. cit., n. 109, p. 159; Bruce, op. cit., n. 109, p. 91; Levi, op. cit., n. 108, p. 14.

various reasons, it was unacceptable as an official Church Bible.[117] The Great Bible was the one which had been used for church services ever since 1539. A new edition was needed at the time of Elizabeth to replace the editions of the Great Bible as they fell into disuse and to offset the influence of the Geneva version. A commission of bishops was formed in 1561 for the purpose of preparing a new edition for official use in the church services.[118] The first Bishops Bible was published in 1568 and was to appear in 19 editions in the course of the next four decades.[119] The revised edition of 1572 was the one subsequently reprinted.[120] Although it was widely distributed and used in the churches, because this version was wanting in standards of scholarship, it was never formally recognized as the official edition to be used by the Church of England.[121]

There is evidence to show that Marlowe was familiar with the Vulgate, commonly called the Jerome Bible.[122] Nevertheless, he was also familiar with the text of the Bishops version from listening to readings from it during the church services. One can also assume that the Puritan movement which was rife in Cambridge during his years of study there drew much of

---

117. See Bruce, op. cit., n. 109, p. 93.

118. See ibid., pp. 93 ff.

119. See ibid., p. 94.

120. See ibid.

121. See ibid., pp. xii and 94.

122. Marlowe mentions the Jerome Bible in DF: "Jeromes Bible Faustus, view it well" (65). Weil suggests that Barabas's description of himself as a soldier (JM.1.2.202-205) has been inspired by the following saying of Job: "The life of man upon earth is a warfare, and his days are like the days of a hireling" (Job 7:1). She notes that this phrasing from the Douai Old Testament of 1609 preserves the military quality of the Vulgate version: see op. cit. n. 20, p. 44. The Vulgate version is as follows: "Militia est vita hominis super terram: et sicut dies mercenarii, dies eius". She compares this wording with that of the Geneva version: "Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? and are not his dayes as the dayes of an hyreling?" She notes that the Bishops Bible has "hired servant" instead. See ibid., p. 190, n. 49.

its momentum from the Geneva version.[123] Marlowe was thus exposed to both of these versions of the Bible throughout the years of his training, possibly throughout his life. If the history of the numerous editions and revisions of the English Bible faithfully reflects the interest of the Elizabethans in Scripture, to deny the possibility that the Biblical texts held an important place in the literary works of the sixteenth century possibly could appear to be unrealistic.

As may be expected, Biblical texts will be resorted to throughout this study to support the arguments made as the occasion arises, even in the sections of this analysis which do not deal directly with Biblical or Christian themes. Much of the Biblical material used is drawn from the marginal notes of the Bible editions used.[124] One should not minimize the importance of these notes. Tyndale's translation fell into disfavour because of the Lutheran influence which could be detected in the prefaces and forewords of his translation, but especially in the abundant number of notes which accompanied his text.[125] Their militant character annoyed both the Church and state authorities and provided one of the motives inciting the Anglican clergy to plan an edition from which all the marginal notes of a controversial nature were to be excluded.[126] King James also was eager to produce a new authorized version of the Bible precisely as an opportunity of deleting the numerous "bitter notes" which he disliked

---

123. Bruce makes the following comment: "One may surmise that the Geneva Bible, translation and notes together, played no little part in making British Puritanism the strongly vertebrate movement that it was": op. cit., n. 109, p. 90.

124. Bruce says the notes in the Geneva Bible were "famous": see ibid., p. 90. "The single most important feature of the Geneva Bible, to both the laity and the clergy, consisted in the marginal notes": Berry, op. cit., n. 112, p. 15.

125. See Greenslade, ed. cit., n. 109, pp. 145-146.

126. See ibid., pp. 159-160; Bruce, op. cit., n. 109, p. 94.

in the Geneva Bible.[127] One concludes, therefore, that these marginal notes exercised a considerable influence which should not be minimized.

The analysis of a play would normally entail the study of its matter and form, of the ideas in the play and of the dramatic and literary devices chosen and used to convey these ideas. Regrettably, in this study the emphasis is laid on the ideas at the cost of the form. Marlowe's knowledge reflects the author's voracious habits of reading. The range of topics about which he read covers the field of learning in his day. Classics, history, philosophy, theology, law, medicine are all reflected in his works. To treat adequately all the ideas gleaned from his reading would be beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, these ideas show that the dramatist was first and foremost an intellectual and that his works were primarily intellectual exercises revolving around themes drawn from his reading. This applies to the Tamburlaine plays. For this reason alone, one would be justified in concentrating mainly on the ideas developed in his plays. Consequently, the attention in this analysis is primarily focused on the ideas which seem to form the central themes around which the play is structured. Dramatic devices, the place and meaning of emblems and analogies are given consideration as the opportunity arises but, unfortunately, not to the extent that one would wish this to be done.

The analysis of the religious elements in Tamburlaine is developed according to the following plan. Boas says this about the play:

> The name of Tamburlaine has been so long associated with that of Marlowe as the first heir of his invention produced on a public stage that we scarcely pause to consider how it was that the young dramatist chose so exotic a subject, so different from the themes of classical, Italian, or British origin which had hitherto supplied the chief material for tragedy or tragicomedy in England.[128]

---

127. See Bruce, op. cit., n. 109, pp. 96-97.

128. Boas, op. cit., n. 4, p. 73.

An investigation into the reasons why Marlowe might have chosen so exotic a subject to which the Elizabethans responded so warmly is precisely one of the purposes of the first chapter. Marlowe's play was the medium through which the Elizabethans made or renewed their acquaintance with the Tamerlane-myth. The aim of this chapter is first to describe the main traits and interests of the Elizabethan world of which Marlowe was a part and for which he wrote. The historical background of the Tamerlane-myth will then be examined with special attention given to the traits of the historical character which evolved into the legendary material used by the dramatist. In this way, this chapter hopes to point out the areas of congeniality which might have formed the basis upon which the author and the audience could share and enjoy the experience of the play.

The setting for Marlowe's Tamburlaine is the Moslem world of the Near-East. It might be supposed that the dramatist incorporated a certain set of Moslem elements into his play. Consequently, the Renaissance image of Mahomet the founder of Islam, the essential traits and tenets of the Koran and the Islamic traditions, and the use Marlowe makes of these elements will be examined and form the basis of the second chapter. The nature and the degree of the allegiance to the Islamic faith of several characters will be studied and assessed as opposed to the religious allegiances of the main character Tamburlaine.

The dramatic character of Tamburlaine develops along two aspects, as a man driven by unlimited aspirations and as a divinely-assigned agent entrusted with the mission of a scourge. The eradication of idolatrous practices are the main traditional justification for the deeds of a scourge. Consequently, the theme of idolatry, as it appears in the play, and the manner by which it justifies Tamburlaine for his actions as a scourge are examined. At the same time, the way in which Tamburlaine the Scourge evolves as a man will be studied. All of these points are analysed in this third chapter.

To be a scourge means to be a dedicated warrior. However, Tamburlaine

the man develops his own modes of interpreting his role, his identity, and his dedication as a warrior. All of these aspects are studied in the fourth chapter.

The section on Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God, is divided into two parts. The first part studies the nature of the God of Scourges whom Tamburlaine obeys as well as the prophetic elements linked with Tamburlaine in his mission as a scourge. In a second part, the figure of Tamburlaine as the Wrath and Scourge of God is analysed. Because the theme of the Scourge of God is a Biblical one, one might expect to find that this section borrows heavily from the Bible. An attempt is made to solve the problem of Tamburlaine's moral guilt.

This study is finally brought to a close by outlining a series of conclusions which may be drawn from the various aspects of the religious elements studied throughout the play. The areas of investigation which this study may point to are also indicated.

The Bishops and the Geneva versions are the two sixteenth-century Bibles used as references throughout this study. The edition of the Bishops Bible selected is the 1572 revised edition of the 1568 edition. This Bible offers two parallel versions of the Psalms: one is the version translated from the Hebrew identified in the footnotes by the abbreviation "T.H."; the other is the version used in the Book of Common Prayer identified in the footnotes by "C.P.V.". The edition of the Geneva Bible used is the facsimile of the 1560 edition with an introduction by Lloyd E. Berry and published in Madison in 1969. Both Bibles will be indicated as references for the Biblical texts quoted or alluded to when there is not an appreciable difference in the wording of the text with respect to the point being analysed. The same applies to the references to the Psalms. In cases where the wording in the two above Bibles is not appreciably different from that of the Authorized Version, the latter, edited by C. I. Scofield

and printed in New York in 1967 will be used. Unless specified otherwise, Fredson Bowers's edition of The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe published in Cambridge in 1973, is used for the allusions to and the quotations from Marlowe's plays. This edition of Marlowe's works represents the results of years of extensive research. By using modern methods, Bowers attempted to establish the texts of the plays as closely as possible to what the originals were.[129] Quotations from this edition and from other references as well are, as a rule, in the original spelling, though contractions have been silently expanded. The bibliographical data identifying each authority (without courtesy prefixes) are given in a footnote the first time the reference appears in each chapter: subsequent uses of the same authority within the same chapter are referred to this first footnote for purposes of identifying the reference used.

---

129. See Fredson Bowers, ed., The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe (Cambridge, 1973), vol. 1, p. vii.

Chapter 1

THE ELIZABETHAN WORLD AND THE TAMERLANE - MYTH

The acclaim the Tamburlaine plays received in the days of Marlowe, and after, leaves no doubt whatsoever about their popularity.[1] However, Frederick S. Boas is puzzled by Marlowe's choice of so exotic a topic; others might be perplexed by the Elizabethan's applause for so exotic a play. Clearly, some elements in Tamburlaine pleased the Elizabethans while some factors in the story of Tamburlaine appealed to the dramatist. This chapter proposes to examine in a first section certain traits of the Elizabethans and their world which might account for their interest in this play. In a second part of this chapter, the historical background of the Tamerlane-myth[2] will be explored. This will be followed by a survey of the sixteenth-century accounts of the hero's career through which Marlowe probably became acquainted with the story of Tamburlaine. Some attention will be given to certain aspects of the historical Timur and how these were transformed into legend as well as to the possibility of a Tamerlane-lore existing in Marlowe's day. The purpose of this chapter is not to clarify points of scholarship pertaining to the study of the historical Timur nor is it to clarify the problem of the sources which Marlowe might have used. The purpose is rather to acquaint the

---

1. See in "To the Gentlemen Readers: ..." written by R. J., the printer of the first known edition of Tamburlaine in 1590, in Fredson Bowers, ed., The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe (Cambridge, 1973), vol. 1, p. 77.

2. For the sake of clarity, the names "Timur", "Tamerlane", and "Tamburlaine" will be used to identify the historical character, the chroniclers' hero, and Marlowe's stage character respectively unless the identification or use of specific references require to do otherwise.

reader with the Tamerlane-myth, probably familiar to Marlowe and possibly to some of his audience, and with the historical background of this myth. The ways in which both of these aspects of the story of the hero may bear on the analysis of the religious elements in the play will be examined.

The stage history of Tamburlaine the Great, Parts I and II seems to have begun very soon after the dramatist's student days in Cambridge.[3] On the basis of contemporary external evidence, scholars generally agree that both parts were written and performed for the first time on a date certainly not later than 1588[4] and possibly sometime before 16 November 1587.[5] Unfortunately, the recorded stage history of the play is rather

---

3. Marlowe began his academic career in Corpus Christi College in Cambridge in December 1580. He graduated B.A. in 1584 and proceeded to M.A. sometime after 29 June 1587, date on which a letter was sent by the members of the Privy Council to the Cambridge authorities requesting that Marlowe "should be furthered in the degree he was to take this next Commencement": see Frederick S. Boas, Christopher Marlowe: a Biographical and Critical Study (Oxford, 1940), pp. 10-27.

4. In his epistle "To the Gentlemen readers" prefixed to his Perimedes the Blacksmith (1588), Robert Greene writes that "latelye two Gentlemen Poets", as he says, "had it in derision, for that I could not make my verses jet upon the stage in tragicall buskins, ..., daring God out of heaven with that Atheist Tamburlan": quoted from U. M. Ellis-Fermor, ed., Tamburlaine the Great in Two Parts (London, 1930), pp. 12-13. This is an obvious reference to Tamburlaine's defiant remark in face of his sudden illness: "What daring God torments my body thus, / And seeks to conquer mighty Tamburlaine?" (2T.5.3.42-43). Greene's remark is one of the standard arguments used by scholars to prove the authorship of the play.

5. In a letter addressed to his father and dated 16 November 1587, Philip Gawdy describes an accident which interrupted a performance given by the Lord Admiral's men. He writes the following:

> "My L. Admyrall his men and players having a devyse in ther playe to tye one of their fellowes to a poste and so to shoote him to deathe, having borrowed their callyvers one of the players handes swerved his peece being charged with bullett missed the fellowe he aymed at ..."

The stray bullet brings about the death of two members of the audience and injures a third. This would seem to point to the shooting of the Governor of Babylon hung in chains upon his city walls (2T.5.1.107-159) See E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage (Oxford, 1923), vol. 2, p. 135.

brief. According to Philip Henslowe's Diary, it amounts to fifteen performances of the first part of Tamburlaine between the end of August 1594 and 12 November 1595 and seven performances of the second part between 19 December 1594 and 13 November 1595.[6] One may immediately detect a marked preference for Tamburlaine, Part I. Inventories of the properties and costumes needed for the performances of the play reappear in Henslowe's Diary for the year 1598.[7] Nevertheless, however brief the early stage history of the play may be, there is ample proof that Tamburlaine caught the imagination of the Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences. Una M. Ellis-Fermor lists more than two dozen pre-Commonwealth authors whose works contain allusions to the play.[8] Additional names could be gleaned from the pulpit literature of the day.[9] Whether these allusions praise "the mighty line"[10] of "the Muses Darling"[11] or vilify the author and his hero,[12] time

---

6. See R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert, eds., Henslowe's Diary (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 23-33.

7. See ibid., pp. 319-322.

8. Miss Ellis-Fermor lists them as follows: Greene, Nashe, Peele, Lodge, Dekker, Hall, Rowlands, Drayton, Jonson, Marston, Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Ford, Day, Chettle, Heywood, Massinger, Habington, Stirling, Cooke, Sharpham, Harvey, Taylor, Brathwaite, Suckling and Cowley. She adds that "in the majority of these allusions the name 'Tamburlaine' appears, in the others the reference is unmistakable": see op. cit., n. 4, p. 16, n. 3.

9. For one instance of Tamburlaine's name appearing in a sermon as an example of "cruelty and craft coupled together, a smoothed, dissembled, disguised cruelty", see John King, A Sermon preached at Whitehall on 5. day of November, ann. 1608 (Oxford, 1608), p. 4.

10. Ben Jonson praises Shakespeare and, indirectly, Marlowe in the following lines: "... how farre thou didst our Lily out-shine / Or sporting Kid. or Marlowes mighty line": quoted in John Bakeless, The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe (Cambridge, Mass., 1942), vol. 2, p. 173. Bakeless devotes a whole chapter to the study of Marlowe's "mighty line": see vol. 2, pp. 173-204. See also ibid., vol. 1, pp. 3, 188-196 and 245-248; vol. 2, 228-230, 271 and 286.

11. George Peele, quoted in A. D. Wraight and Virginia F. Stern, In Search of Christopher Marlowe: A Pictorial Biography (London, 1965), p. 328.

12. See ibid., pp. 306-307. See also above, p. 33, n. 4.

was to prove that each had made the fame of the other in the theatrical world.[13]. Marlowe was established as a playwright in the measure that his Tamburlaine had fascinated the audiences of his times.

Several factors related to the form and content of the play could account for its success. Indeed, apart from complementing the Englishman's innate love for, and some critics go so far as to say his need for,[14] the theatre as a medium of artistic expression, Tamburlaine the Great probably exercised an attraction of its own on purely artistic grounds. For the first time, the Elizabethans experienced the flexibility of the metric structure of blank verse. This verse could lend itself to a wide variety of emotions ranging from elusive and delicate feelings to surges

---

13. Gabriel Harvey identifies Marlowe with Tamburlaine in the following words:

> "Weepe Powles, thy Tamberlaine voutsafes to dye.
> Is it a Dreame? or is the Highest Minde
> That ever haunted Powles of hunted winde, ...:

see ibid., p. 329. Bakeless says that "to think of Marlowe is to think of Tamburlaine": op. cit., n. 10, vol. 1, p. 190.

14. Henry O. Taylor, in Thought and Expression in the Sixteenth-Century (New York, 1920), vol. 1, pp. 97 ff., describes how form and colour, or sculpture and painting, were the forms of artistic expression particularly suited to the Italian mind and taste as part of their Graeco-Roman heritage of mental habit (p. 97). This explains why Italian drama at this time was only an occasion for show, why dialogue at best could become only word painting, and why painting and sculpture utterly surpassed the literature of this period in Italy. What the Italians did with form and colour, the English did through the medium of the word in drama. Drama seems to have been the form of artistic expression best suited to the English mind to develop themes similar to those which the Italians displayed in plastic arts. L.C. Salingar shows how the literary achievements of the Tudor age was particularly remarkable for its wide range of interests and its vitality of language. One of the major factors contributing to this "was the persistence of popular customs of speech and thought and entertainment rooted in the communal life of medieval towns and villages". Elizabethans were more accustomed to group life than to privacy. Their "tradition of entertainment in the form of festival or pageanty - communal celebration of communal events" provided an ideal social context for the appreciation and reception of a group literary expression and experience of the "communal art" of drama. See "The Social Setting" in Boris Ford, ed., The Pelican Guide to English Literature: The Age of Shakespeare (Penguin Books, 1971 ed.), pp. 16-17. Indeed, the stage-audience setting seemed to answer an inherent need of the Elizabethan mind. It extended itself to inn-yards, bear-baiting arenas, as well as to the theatre: see Kenneth Muir, "Changing Interpretations of Shakespeare" in ibid., p. 282. Even the

cont'd./

of violent passion.[15] The day when Shakespeare would succeed in blending the metric form with the dramatic content of the moment was yet to come.[16] Nevertheless, in spite of its beat, still too regular in many instances, the "mighty line" of Tamburlaine made evident that the "jygging vaines of riming mother wits" (1T. Pro. 1) had had their day. Whatever critics had to say about his poetry,[17] Marlowe's blank verse opened up new perspectives to be explored in the use of language in the English play. Moreover, Marlowe's use of metre, the structure of his poetic images, and his varying syntactic patterns[18] combined to expand the scope and meaning of his verse,

---

Footnote 14 cont'd./

setting of the Paul's Cross sermons has been compared to a theatre: see Millar MacLure, The Paul's Cross Sermons: 1534-1642 (Toronto, 1958), p. 4.

15. For some illustrations of effects produced by the various internal metric structures of Marlowe's blank verse, see Wraight and Stern, op. cit., n. 11, pp. 332 ff. For a series of various poetic devices used by Marlowe, see Bakeless, op. cit., n. 10, vol. 2, p. 183.

16. See Salingar, "The Elizabethan Literary Renaissance", in Ford, ed. cit., n. 14, p. 103. See also Derek Traversi, "Shakespeare: the Young Dramatist" in ibid.. p. 179.

17. In the passage previously referred to (See p. 33, n. 4 and p. 35, n. 13 above.) where Marlowe is generally associated with Tamburlaine, Robert Greene criticizes the "two Gentlemen Poets" for their "intollerable poetrie", "If there be anye in England that set the end of scollarisme in an English blanck verse, I thinke ... it is the humor of a novice that tickles them with selfe-love ...": Quoted in Ellis-Fermor, ed. cit. n. 4, pp. 12-13. Thomas Nashe describes Marlowe's blank verse as "the spacious volubility of a drumming decasyllabon"; see Salingar, in Ford, ed. cit, n. 14, p. 74.

18. See D. C. Freeman, "'Brave to Be a King': A Stylistic Analysis of Christopher Marlowe's Dramatic Poetry", University of Connecticut unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, 1965, (DA 26, 5411). Freeman attempts to show how Marlowe carefully controls the form to suit the need of the dramatic moment by analysing closely the syntactic structure of several passages in Tamburlaine, Parts I and II. Doctor Faustus. The Jew of Malta. and Edward II. In many cases, the analyses of the passages are illustrated by means of a structural diagram for each passage. Freeman shows that the main formal device used in Tamburlaine is that of syntactic expansion. This is achieved by one or more of the following methods: by using heavy modification of the subject, the verb, or the complement; by compounding syntactic structure; by using "nested modifiers" (p. 9) by which a major modifying structure is expanded by the modification of many of its internal elements. Marlowe expands ideas into long periodics or "verse paragraphs" (p. 10) which, in spite of their complexities, are nevertheless delivered with

cont'd./

and created visions of a hero whose strength and stature contributed dimension and momentum to the action of the play. Thus, what has been qualified as a "rich, turgid, bombastic style" of "bright glitter" and "barbaric beauty"[19] by some, served to open a new era in the literary use of the English language. Finally, much as the play represents a worthy literary achievement, its potential as a stage performance must be given due credit. Marlowe's Tamburlaine had all the ingredients required to make it a colourful spectacle.[20] Its royal setting, ceremonies, banquets, coronations, and military arrays could feast the eye while the poetry charmed the ear. Thus, the artistic claims alone might have justified the applause which this play received from the audiences of London.

However, form alone cannot account for the success of this play. The topic treated also had to appeal to the public. The dramatist had to provide some basis upon which a kinship could be developed between his hero and the audience throughout the various phases of Tamburlaine's career. This kinship was possibly more difficult to develop than might appear at first. For, if many Elizabethans were inspired by visions of

---

Footnote 18 cont'd./

a high degree of metrical regularity. Thus, an illusion of grandeur is created by the speed, an illusion often counterpointed by the baseness of the action. This analysis shows that, in general, the more intense the emotions of the hero, the more involved is the form. It also shows that form can develop a dramatic irony of its own, enhancing that of the sense or situation, an irony behind which Marlowe's dramatic mask remains impenetrable. For the formal analysis of Tamburlaine, Parts I and II. see pp. 17-89.

19. See Michel Poirier, Marlowe (London, 1968, ed.), p. 117.

20. The Elizabethans were especially fond of the colour, pomp, and ceremony which accompanied Elizabeth in and outside of London. For the colour and ceremony of Elizabeth's coronation, see J. E. Neale, Queen Elizabeth (London, 1934), pp. 67-70. For a description of the Queen's progresses, see ibid., pp. 205-212. For the colourful celebrations of the defeat of the Spanish Armada, see ibid., pp. 300-301.

and created visions of a hero whose strength and stature contributed dimension and momentum to the action of the play. Thus, what has been qualified as a "rich, turgid, bombastic style" of "bright glitter" and "barbaric beauty"[19] by some, served to open a new era in the literary use of the English language. Finally, much as the play represents a worthy literary achievement, its potential as a stage performance must be given due credit. Marlowe's Tamburlaine had all the ingredients required to make it a colourful spectacle.[20] Its royal setting, ceremonies, banquets, coronations, and military arrays could feast the eye while the poetry charmed the ear. Thus, the artistic claims alone might have justified the applause which this play received from the audiences of London.

However, form alone cannot account for the success of this play. The topic treated also had to appeal to the public. The dramatist had to provide some basis upon which a kinship could be developed between his hero and the audience throughout the various phases of Tamburlaine's career. This kinship was possibly more difficult to develop than might appear at first. For, if many Elizabethans were inspired by visions of

---

Footnote 18 cont'd./

a high degree of metrical regularity. Thus, an illusion of grandeur is created by the speed, an illusion often counterpointed by the baseness of the action. This analysis shows that, in general, the more intense the emotions of the hero, the more involved is the form. It also shows that form can develop a dramatic irony of its own, enhancing that of the sense or situation, an irony behind which Marlowe's dramatic mask remains impenetrable. For the formal analysis of Tamburlaine, Parts I and II, see pp. 17-89.

19. See Michel Poirier, Marlowe (London, 1968, ed.), p. 117.

20. The Elizabethans were especially fond of the colour, pomp, and ceremony which accompanied Elizabeth in and outside of London. For the colour and ceremony of Elizabeth's coronation, see J. E. Neale, Queen Elizabeth (London, 1934), pp. 67-70. For a description of the Queen's progresses, see ibid., pp. 205-212. For the colourful celebrations of the defeat of the Spanish Armada, see ibid., pp. 300-301.

achievement as wide as the world,[21] the very name of Tamburlaine evoked a historical context about which they experienced very mixed feelings.[22] Tamburlaine belonged to the vast Moslem world of the East whose reality spelt itself out in various ways to the Englishman of the 1580's. As the action of the play unfolded itself on the stage, it told of far-off regions, still wrapped in mystery and legends for the average Elizabethan. These remote regions remained a persistent attraction to the curious traveller who had the courage to face the perils of a long sea voyage, the possibility of attacks by pirates on sea and bands of robbers on land, the hazards of the long overland journey across mountains and deserts through the Ottoman Empire into Persia, or the risks of becoming involved in incidents with a more or less friendly host.[23] .The glowing accounts of these travellers entertained the stay-at-home and informed him with various degrees of accuracy[24] of the wealth[25] and colour of the Eastern world, of the way of life, the habits, and the methods of warfare

---

21. Salingar thinks that the timely appearance of Tamburlaine the Great explains to some extent the impact the play had on drama as a whole. According to him, "the high astounding terms of the shepherd conqueror, coming at the peak of enthusiasm for the exploits of men like Drake, gave a decisive momentum to the dramatic speech of the next twenty years": see in Ford, ed. cit., n. 14, p. 57.

22. In the preface to his book, Samuel C.Chew affirms that "the Moslems were never, in the Near and Middle East, wholly absent from the anxious thoughts of Elizabethan travellers, even when their interests were fixed, to the exclusion of the immediate present, upon classical or Biblical associations or upon the marvels of the Orient": see The Crescent and the Rose (New York, 1937), p. vii. Stories of the Cham people, tales of Egypt, the "fountain of all science", Biblical themes and characters, the wonderful career of Alexander, tall stories about Prester John and monsters: all these were part of the lore which made these lands especially alluring to the curious traveller of the Renaissance period. See ibid., pp. 4 ff. See also the chapter on the Classical and Biblical past of the Orient, ibid., ch. 2.

23. See ibid., pp. 45 ff., and 57 ff.

24. On the tall stories to be found in the accounts of travellers, see ibid., ch. 1.

25. See ibid., pp. 150 ff.

of its inhabitants. Negotiations, with the purpose of making new trade routes secure and of establishing new bases, had been repeatedly undertaken. Trading companies were formed, the Levant Company of 1581 being one of them,[26] and attempts to develop diplomatic relations in order to assure their protection were made. These commercial and diplomatic relations were slow to grow, their history having its share of woes and hardships to relate.[27] Finally, some made their way to the Orient simply to attend to the spiritual needs of their fellow-travellers;[28] others, impelled by missionary zeal, hoped to proselytize the Moslems who, by Christian standards, were infidels. Thus the responses to Tamburlaine's world were varied. The average citizen was simply curious about its exotic character, the trader was enticed by the commercial possibilities at hand, and the diplomat was stimulated by the prospects of new diplomatic ventures. However, religious issues at stake could generate a genuine alarm which was shared by the whole Elizabethan social spectrum.

Europeans generally assumed that Christianity was the one true faith and, thereby, that the Islamic beliefs were heresies.[29] Feelings of antagonism towards Islam could be so strong that doctrinal differences between the various Christian denominations sometimes simply dissolved in face of the Moslem threat.[30] Centuries of warfare had widened the gap between the

---

26. See ibid., p. 153 and n. 2.

27. See ibid., pp. 150 ff.

28. See ibid., pp. 45-53.

29. Blaise de Vigenere in L'Histoire de la Decadence de l'Empire Grec. et establissement de celvy des Turcs: ... (Paris, 1584), a translation of the works of Nicolas Chalcondyle, categorizes the world into two faiths: the Christian under the leadership of Christ and the Moslem under the leadership of Mahomet: see pp. 133-134 and p. 134 n. This implies that the Christian faith is the one true faith as opposed to the heretical one. However, according to Chew, the religious camps were not so clearly defined. English Protestants and European Reformers easily considered themselves to be the defenders of the true Church against the threats of the Roman Church and the Moslem Turks. On the other hand, the Roman Church combined assaults against the Moslems with those against the Reformed Churches. Moslems were enemies common to both: see op. cit., n. 22, p. 101 and n. 1.

30. See op. cit., n. 22, pp. 101, and 104.

Moslem and the Christian faiths and had made the Moslem world first and foremost the arch-enemy of Christendom. The struggle had been long and arduous and the victories few, especially for the troops sent from Western Europe. These lacked the proper war machine needed to face the military skill of the Moslems. Internecine quarrels spread division among the Christian princes. As a result, the Christian troops lacked the kind of leadership needed to coordinate their forces and organize an army strong enough to face the Moslems, whose singleness of purpose was their main source of strength.[31] Thus, the Moslem hordes had made their way towards the West, and had repeatedly attacked Constantinople, the stronghold of the Christians in Europe. They finally broke through in 1453 with the fall of that city, and subsequently overran large areas of Europe. However, by 1580, Europe had a few happier dates to remember. Christian allies had held out against the Turks in the sieges of Vienna in 1529 and of Malta in 1565, but the best remembered victory was that of Lepanto in 1571.[32] The news of this triumph had made the Christians exuberant with joy. At long last, the Ottoman Emperor was no longer invincible and God was favouring the Christian forces in their battles against the infidels.[33]

On the whole, England as a nation had kept aloof from these wars against the Moslems. The country enjoyed a certain security from its insular position. Yet the nation as a whole could not remain totally indifferent to the trials and successes of the European Christians against the Turks. Churches in England had temporarily forgotten their religious

---

31. See ibid., pp. 101, 108-109 and 115.

32. The year of the victory of Lepanto "remained traditionally a proud year, not eclipsed even by the more glorious renown" of 1588: ibid., p. 130. See also ibid., pp. 115-118 and 130-131.

33. See ibid., p. 104. Internationally, England was in an awkward position. Commercial rivalry with Venice, political and economic rivalry with Spain, religious differences with all the Catholic countries of Europe, trade interests, enmity to idolatry: all these factors made it difficult for England to define her line of sympathies with other countries in face of the Moslem threat.

differences to join in prayers of thanksgiving with European Churches for the relief of the Christians during the siege of Malta in 1565.[34] Again, in spite of religious differences, the English could not help having feelings of sympathy and compassion for the Christians who lived at the mercy of the Turks either on the battlefield or in Turkish lands as captives of the Moslems. Tales of horrible cruelty and oppression kept alive the Christians hatred for the Moslem.[35] So did the occasional appeals made at church doors for alms destined to pay the ransom for this or that captive of the Turks, sometimes English, sometimes kin to new immigrants.[36] Foreigners, Greeks, Armenians, or others were sometimes seen on the streets of London begging for help to release relatives left behind in their native country under the domination of the Turks.[37] Whether these solicitors were honest men or frauds[38] playing on the generosity of their hosts, the latter were thereby constantly reminded of the tyranny exercised by the Turks against their fellow-Christians in these distant lands. Thus, the English

---

34. See ibid., pp. 123-124. Protestant England had responded to the Pope's appeal to all Christendom to pray for the victory of Malta fighting against the Turks.

35. Reports of this nature had been brought by Greek refugees after the fall of Constantinople in 1453: see ibid., pp. 135-136. See also ibid., pp. 48 and 50. Englishmen could hear such stories of misery in taverns, on streets, or by church doorways from exiles, or from discharged veterans of wars with the Turks: see ibid. p. 138.

36. The custom of collecting alms for the redemption of prisoners of the Turks had existed from the beginning of the sixteenth century: see ibid., pp. 135-136. Worshippers rendered thanks for the mercy shown slaves redeemed out of the captivity of the Moslems; deliverance of captives was achieved through private charity and collections occasionally authorized in individual dioceses: see ibid., p. 385. See also MacLure, op. cit., n. 14, p. 11.

37. Greek exiles in need of help were in Oxford in 1563; a Greek archbishop was travelling in England collecting funds at this time: see Chew, op. cit., n. 22, p. 136.

38. See ibid., p. 138.

viewed the Moslem world with mixed feelings.

There were the few, however, who thought they detected certain affinities between the Moslem and the English. In contrast to the European princes, Elizabeth was succeeding in developing a strong national spirit. She could channel the energies of her people into concerted action, military or otherwise, as the Turks were able to do in their empire and as the Christian princes on the Continent failed to achieve. At times, religious controversies centring on issues, minor by modern standards, as, for instance, the use of images or bells in churches, could run to a high pitch. Elizabeth is reported to have expressed regard for the Moslems who refused to allow such superstitious practices within their boundaries.[39] Moreover, there were advantages, both commercial and political, to be gained by securing alliances with the Ottoman Empire, as the king of France had well known. Indeed, the Rex Christianissimus[40] Francis I had already shocked the Christian princes of Europe as early as 1536 when he had concluded a treaty with Soliman and his Turks, having previously entered into relations with them on two different occasions, in 1525 and in 1528.[41] The idea of similar alliances was not foreign to the queen's policy.

Yet, the antagonism against the Turk remained very strong[42] as numerous

---

39. At some time Elizabeth describes herself "to the image-hating Moslem" as "one who shared his detestation of the worshippers of idols, that is, the Roman Catholics": see ibid., p. 152. For the occasional tinge of Protestant sympathy with Islam in England, see ibid., p. 200, n. 1.

40. See ODCC, article "France", and Chew, op. cit., n. 22, p. 101.

41. See A. W. Ward, G. W. Prothero, and Stanley Leathes, eds., The Cambridge Modern History: The Reformation (Cambridge, 1904), vol. 2, p. 69. On Francis I's pro-Turk interests as a counterpoise to the Emperor Charles V, see Chew, op. cit., n. 22, p. 101.

42. Chew makes the following comment about the England of the late 1590's with regard to trade interests: "Though it ran contrary to the course of action adopted by the government, there was a strong anti-Turkish sentiment in England": Chew, op. cit., n. 22, p. 259. The statement is made in connection with the developing interests of the Shirley brothers in Persia. "There was in England the popular fear and detestation of the Turk": ibid., p. 151.

allusions in the period literature prove.[43] This antagonism was grounded mainly on religious issues. More often than not, "the Great Turk" was identified with the "sathanicall Sarazen",[44] sometimes with Satan himself.[45] Because the Moslems were so unyielding towards any interests other than Islamic, the only hope of resolving this enmity with the Turks lay in warfare unless those engaged in promoting diplomatic and commercial relations could become sufficiently detached from the religious issues involved to allow their secular interests to take priority.[46] This is what eventually

---

43. For evidence of prejudices of the English against the Turks in the period literature, see ibid., pp. 141-149.

44. Thomas Newton, in A Notable Historie of the Saracens. ..., (London, 1575), based on material drawn from Augustine Curio and others, explains in his dedicatory word that he "traueiled to bringe to light for the benefite of my Cuntreymen this historicall Discourse of Saracens, Turks and other Reprobates of the same stampe and Lyuerey..." Later in his book, he speaks of "that Sathanical crew" of Turkish leaders (see sig. B iiii v) or of the "barbarous Helhoundes the Saracenes" (fol. 36). Similar terms frequently occur in the literature of the period.

45. Turks were often referred to as "incarnate devils", at the very least, "chosen followers of Satan, ... all derived from hell or were all going there". The Sultan was closely associated with Satan in the popular imagination: see Chew, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 141 and 142.

46. It would seem that the problem of reconciling religious allegiances with secular interests often presented serious difficulties for all involved. Commercial interests could be intertwined with religious fanaticism as they were in the case of the Persian Shah's hatred of Turks and Christians: see Chew, op. cit., n. 22, p. 210. Persians belonged to the Shi'a Moslem sect which was bitterly opposed to the Sunnite Moslems and to the Christians. On the other hand, at some stage, when they were attempting to establish commercial relationships with Persian merchants, some Englishmen took note "of any characteristics of Shi'a Mohammedanism that appeared to link it with Christianity and separate it from the orthodox Sunni Mohammedanism of the Turks": ibid., p. 223. They were even looking forward to the possibility of an alliance between Persia and Christendom against the Ottoman Empire: see ibid. Neither the Christians nor the Moslems could remove themselves completely from the religious issues involved when they were attending to purely secular interests. Religion permeated all phases of life. See also ibid., pp. 151-152. "At a much later date, James I was reluctant to receive an emissary from the Sultan on the ground that to welcome an infidel would be unbecoming to a Christian Prince": ibid., p. 152.

happened in the course of the seventeenth century. But in the meanwhile, the problem dividing the Moslems from the European Christians remained centred on religious points at least for the contemporaries of Tamburlaine and the few succeeding decades.

Attempts had been made to offset some of the bitter criticism showered upon Francis I and the German princes by Christian leaders, notably, Charles V, for their sympathetic interests in the Ottoman Empire. These efforts had been mainly concentrated on attempts to reconcile the Moslem and the Christian faiths on issues common to both creeds. English agents hoped to collect a body of doctrinal tenets common to both beliefs which could act as a basis of reconciliation for these two worlds.[47] The attempts had met with little success; the two faiths remained irrevocably divided on issues concerning the dogmas of the Holy Trinity and the divinity of Christ, his death and resurrection. These were but a few of the points of radical dissent.[48]

Thus, it is scarcely surprising to discover that historians of the period tended to analyse the attitudes of Europeans with respect to the Ottoman Turk mainly from the religious point of view. Laonicus Chalcondylas is such an example. In his book about Turkish affairs, he describes the world of his day as divided into two parts by religion: one part adhering to the Moslem faith, the other belonging to the true Christian faith.[49] The antagonism of the Christians towards the Moslems was so real that some felt a certain uneasiness even about writing on a topic as taboo as was any-

---

47. See above p. 42 ff., and p. 43, n. 46.

48. See Chew, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 223-226.

49. Laonicus Chalcondylas says the following: "Vniuersi enim orbis nobis noti religio potissimum in duas diuiditur partes. Partim enim Machmetanae, partim uero Christianae religioni adhaerent. Reliquae autem religiones, ut inutiles, nec in regnum admittuntur, nec etiam aliquam dignitatem merentur": De Origine et rebvs gestis Tvrcorum Libri Decem. ... (Basileae, 1556), p. 32. See also above, pp. 39-40, p. 39, n. 29.

thing Moslem.[50] This uneasiness was compared to the one the early Christians had felt about studying the pagan works of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Even in the second half of the seventeenth century, Pierre Vattier used the value placed in the study of ancient history, in spite of the fact that many Roman emperors had persecuted the Christians, as an argument to justify his translations of the history of the Turks and of the story of the "Grand Tamerlan".[51]

As may be seen, feelings of the Europeans about the Moslem world were mixed indeed. Europeans felt both drawn and repelled by this world. Travellers, traders, diplomats, were attracted by these distant regions. On the other hand, the centuries of strife between Christendom and Islam engendered fears of Turkish oppression and dislike for the Islamic faith. Thus the Europeans could not ignore the presence of the Moslems. In the same way that Moslems elicited responses of various kinds from the Europeans, so would the name of Tamburlaine, or of Timur,[52] provoke varied reactions

---

50. Periodically, attempts had been made to bring to the knowledge of the public the absurdities of some of the Moslem beliefs as a means of propaganda against that faith and its adherents. At the end of the fifteenth century, Bishop Guglielmo Raimondo, a Sicilian, had published at Venice a Latin translation of the Koran with such a purpose in mind: see Chew, op. cit., n. 22, p. 434, n. 2. Later Theodorus Bibliander collected, edited, and analysed this material in his Machumetis Sarracenorum Principis Vita et Doctrina omnia, edition without place or date (1543?): see Chew, ibid., pp. 434-435 and p. 435 n. 1, and pp. 449-450. The tone of this and other studies was plainly antagonistic. Nevertheless,

> despite the rancorous contempt expressed in his other controversial writings (particularly the Confutationes Legis Machumaticae). Bibliander suffered notoriety and discredit and was in danger of prosecution for tampering with and offering to the Christian public, these damnable doctrines :

see ibid., p. 435. As late as in 1707, this was again the aim of the anonymous translator of Echialle Mufti's treatise on the religion or theology of the Turks as he explains in his foreword: see Echialle Mufti, Religion ou Theologie des Turcs (Bruxelles, 1707), sig. a iii.

51. Pierre Vattier, L'Histoire Mahométane... (Paris, 1657), Preface, pp. 10-12.

52. For the meaning intended in the use of "Timur", "Tamerlane", and "Tamburlaine", see above, p. 32, n. 2.

from the English. Tamburlaine, by his fame and career, evoked the distant lands of the East under the rule of Islam. However, attraction for the exotic prevailed, at least to some extent, over the repulsion which the Moslem hero might have inspired.

For, with the years, traits especially attractive to the Elizabethans had become attached to his name. Time had adorned the Moslem hero with an aura of the wonderful and the marvellous. He had mysteriously appeared from the depths of the Orient, had played his part on the political and military scenes and, just as mysteriously, had receded back into the distant regions of his world. His brief involvement with European affairs, however, had changed the destiny of nations, even the geographical orientation of Turkish Islamic warfare. He was remembered as the only force equal to the hitherto invincible Bajazet, "the Great Turk", known as "the Thunderbolt" or "the Lightning". By defeating Bajazet near mount Stella in Ankara in 1402, Timur's victory had saved European Christendom, temporarily at least, from the Ottoman onslaught. Almost two centuries had transformed him into a legendary character, obliterating some chapters of his life story and creating others. Exponents of his story varied in their attitudes towards Tamerlane depending on the angle from which he was described. Again, one's position with respect to religion coloured the Scythian's place in history. But, in general, the legendary image of Tamerlane which lingered on in the minds of Europeans forced them to admit that this Scythian had truly been a great historical figure.

However, under the scrutiny of a European Christian, the character of Tamerlane remained controversial. At first glance, his defeat of "the Great Turk" placed him on the side of the Christians in conflict with the Moslems of the Ottoman Empire and, therefore, made him one of their allies. Nevertheless, Tamerlane was also a Moslem and, consequently, spiritually closer to the troops he had defeated at Ankara than to the Christians of

Constantinople who had cheered his victory. The legendary image of Tamerlane was not without its blemishes. Thus, paradox was an essential trait of Tamerlane's character in contemporary accounts, whether these were based on facts or on facts altered with much fiction. Marlowe had to present this paradox in terms acceptable to his audiences if his play was to be a success.

One may point out that the Marlovian hero was part of an already much wider range of entertainment and repertoire of plays based on Oriental themes. Interest in the exotic Turks was reflected in masques and pageants[53] as it was in the dramatic world of the sixteenth century. As a matter of fact, Chew judges that, by treating Moslem topics, the theatre provided "some compensation for the dread which moved the Elizabethans when they thought of Islam."[54] Praise for the brave travelling scholar who sought the Holy Land, satires against the fanatical enthusiasm of pilgrims urged on by piety or curiosity,[55] the feats of the crusader: all were themes developed in drama, the dramatic works of Thomas Middleton, Thomas Heywood, and Thomas Dekker, being later examples of this interest.[56] Moslems of various sorts held the stage for years. The devotees chiding their god Mahomet who had failed to grant them the desired victory in Robert Greene's Alphonsus King of Arragon,[57] the dramatized story of George Sanderbeg, entered in the Stationers' Register in 1601, now lost and about which little

---

53. A persistent interest in Oriental dress and customs was fed by masques, pageants, water and sea fights in which the participants appeared in full Turkish regalia. This form of entertainment was loved by Englishmen throughout the Tudor period. See Chew, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 452 ff.

54. Ibid., p. 99.

55. See ibid., pp. 95-96.

56. See ibid., p. 95, n. 4 and 5 and p. 96, n. 2.

57. See ibid., pp. 473 ff.

is known,[58] and other plays entertained the English audiences each its turn.

Chew mentions a story told by William Paynter in his Palace of Pleasure (1566) in which the tale of Mahomet II is related at great length.[59] Chew lists the themes of this story which probably formed the plot of a famous play, also now lost, called The Turkish Mahomet and Hyrin the fair Greek written by George Peele and probably performed in 1594-1595.[60] The story of Mahomet and Irene and that of Tamburlaine and Zenocrate are similar in many ways. Mahomet captures Constantinople and makes Irene his slave. He becomes infatuated with her to the point of neglecting politics and war much to the discontent of his soldiers. As a result of the protests made by his counsellor, Mahomet experiences the pains of a conflict between Love for Irene and the Honour of war. Honour wins over Love at the expense of Irene. He kills her to prove his point while attending a banquet.[61] Do we detect in this story elements which Marlowe would have used to create the relationship between Tamburlaine and Zenocrate? Tamburlaine captures Zenocrate and repeatedly rhapsodizes about her beauty. He experiences the conflict of Love versus Honour until he decides the fate of Damascus regardless of Zenocrate's wishes in the matter; he lets Honour triumph over his own feelings and those of Zenocrate. These are but a few aspects which bear a striking resemblance to the story of Mahomet and Irene. This story was well known; Richard Knolles reproduces it from Paynter, sometimes word for word according to Chew.[62] Judging from the allusions made to this play in contemporary drama, there is no doubt that

---

58. See ibid., p. 477.

59. See ibid., pp. 480 ff.

60. See ibid., pp. 483-485.

61. See ibid., p. 482.

62. See ibid., p. 480, n. 4. See also App. A.

it was popular. The theme of Mahomet and Irene seems to reappear under various names down to Gilbert Swinhoe's Unhappy Fair Irene written before 1640 and first published in 1658.

Selimus, Bajazet the Second, Soliman and Persida[63] and other plays on Turkish themes appeared on the stages in London at this time. Persian subjects also provided material for dramas like The Travailes of the Three English Brothers written by the two brothers Sir Thomas and Sir Anthony Shirley and entered on the Stationers' Register in 1607, and like The Sophy by Sir John Denham in 1642, these being but two of the plays on Persian themes.[64] The Barbary states with their history of conflicts between the Moors and the Christians in Spain, and their feats of Moorish piracy also inspired playwrights. William Rowley wrote All's Lost by Lust in 1619, a mixture of historical facts and much romantic material about a great Spanish leader Roderigo. Another Hispano-Moorish subject was Lust's Dominion sometimes identified with The Spanish Moor's Tragedy for which Henslowe paid Dekker, John Day, and William Haughton in 1600.[65] One could go on adding names of dramatic works, Marlowe's Jew of Malta and John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's The Knight of Malta in 1618 being two more which reflect the people's interest in Moslem issues. The list of plays on Moslem themes which graced the stages in London is long; new ones appeared as late as the second half of the seventeenth century. The personalities and episodes drawn from the Turkish, Persian, Hungarian, and Moorish annals of history provided the basic material used in these dramatic works. Consequently, these plays reflect the popular knowledge

---

63. See ibid., pp. 490 ff. The authorship of Selimus is uncertain: see ibid., p. 252, n. 1. Bajazet the Second, also known as The Raging Turk, appeared in 1631: see ibid., p. 492, n. 1. Soliman and Persida was perhaps written by Kyd: see ibid., p. 252, n. 2.

64. See ibid., pp. 504 ff.

65. See ibid., pp. 518 ff.

of the English about the Moslems and their faith.[66] However, of all the various types of Moslems who held the stage at one time or another, Tamburlaine is recognized to have been the greatest of them all in "the most famous of all English dramas upon Oriental subjects".[67] Through this play, Marlowe exercised a considerable influence on the drama of his day and after.

Modern Marlovian scholars find difficulty in acclaiming Tamburlaine's greatness. Under their scrutiny, Marlowe's hero reveals a long list of villainies, quite incompatible with any system of Christian or even human ethics. Rebellion is a serious offence by any standards and requires more than the fulfilment of one's ambitions to be justified. Yet, Tamburlaine gives his aid and support to Cosroe against the legitimate ruler, his brother-king Mycetes. He later eliminates Cosroe and takes the crown on purely arbitrary terms. For him, the seizure of this crown is simply a step towards the realization of the destiny he believes to be his. In practical terms, he appears to be nothing more than a tyrannical usurper of power who gilds his actions in superb oratory. He flouts the concepts of order and authority, the basis of stability of any social system. As he fulfils his self-assigned mission as a scourge, he seems totally devoid of any principles of morality. Crime succeeds crime; casualties accumulate as Tamburlaine clears his way to world power. By the same tokens, modern scholars find the acclaim which the Elizabethans gave to Marlowe's play difficult to explain. Besides applauding the feats of a Moslem, the Elizabethans were admiring a hero who flouted their traditional concepts of cosmic, political, and social order. Tamburlaine's code of ethics, at best, is no better than amoral. And yet, Marlowe's Tamburlaine undeniably

---

66. For an extensive description of the English drama on Moslem themes, see ibid., ch. 11, pp. 469-540.

67. Ibid., p. 470.

pleased the Elizabethans. One wonders what message the dramatist was trying to convey to his audiences through the medium of his play and how much the Elizabethans were already prepared to understand what Marlowe was about.

Marlowe and his contemporaries probably shared a certain amount of knowledge, true or fictive, about Tamburlaine. Many accounts of his career were available in the sixteenth century, as will be examined later. There is also the possibility that Tamerlane, the legendary hero, might have been the subject of a popular oral lore.[68] However, the image of Tamerlane which emerges from these accounts is neither totally that of the Tamburlaine, hero of the play, nor is it that of Timur, the historical warrior. In fact, it has been said that Marlowe's Tamburlaine differs as much from the chroniclers' Tamerlane as the latter differs from the historical Timur.[69] While Marlowe may be said to have magnified the image of Tamerlane which he found in the accounts he read, "the life-size Timur the Lame dwarfs the hero of the stage"[70] in the magnitude of his triumphs and power and in the extent of his cruelty. Undeniably, as the story of the hero travelled west from the scene of action, discrepancy between fact and fiction increased. So did this discrepancy grow as the story of Timur was handed down through successive generations. Thus, the story of this Scythian, while moving through space and time, had been gradually transformed into a myth and its hero into a legendary figure. Nevertheless, because legends or myths invariably grow around a core of truth or are made to illustrate a truth, a comparison of the elements which make up the Tamerlane-myth with the

---

68. See below, pp. 127 ff. and notes.

69. See Ellis-Fermor, ed. cit., n. 4, p. 17.

70. See Hilda Hookham, Tamburlaine the Conqueror (London, 1962), p. 1.

facts of the historical Timur may show some elements of truth around which the legend grew. This comparison may bring out some aspects of the mental processes by which this transformation of fact into fiction was brought about. It might reveal how popular imagination had assimilated some aspects and altered others into a legend more congenial with its aspirations, fears, and interests.

Timur's career can be reconstructed from various sources. There are accounts, which he is said to have written or dictated himself, and reports written in Persian or Turkish by his own scribes, or secretaries, or those of his sons and grandsons. Men who met Timur while fulfilling their functions as diplomatic officials, or who were kept as his prisoners, or who simply were contemporaries of Timur also wrote about their experiences. Hilda Hookham[71] is the first to have published a modern detailed reconstruction of the life and career of the historical Timur by drawing abundantly from such evidence.[72] Before her Harold Lamb[73] had written a short popular biography of Timur while the scholar V. V. Barthold,[74] a veritable "Gibbon of Turkestan" according to some,[75] examined the career of Timur in the historical, political, and geographical contexts in which he lived.

The two accounts which Timur is alleged to have written or dictated himself have been translated by Major Charles Stewart[76] and by Major

---

71. See ibid.

72. Hookham's bibliography lists a considerable number of works and studies related to the study of Timur. For a survey of the sources used, see op. cit., n. 70, pp. 319-322. For a list of studies related to the topic, see ibid. pp. 323-331.

73. Harold Lamb, Tamerlane, The Earth Shaker (London, 1929).

74. V. V. Barthold, Four Studies in the History of Central Asia (Leiden, 1956, 1958, 1962), trans. from the Russian by V. and T. Minorsky, 3 vol.

75. See The Times, 26 August 1930, obituary notice: quoted in Barthold, op. cit. n. 74, vol. 1, p. vii.

76. The first is The Mulfuzat Timury, or Autobiographical Memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Timur written in the Jagtay Turky Language, turned into Persian by Abu Talib Hussyny, and translated into English by Major

cont'd./

William Davy.[77] In spite of the fact that their authenticity is still debated,[78] Hookham and Barthold refer to them occasionally. One of the accounts written by Timur's historians[79] and used by Hookham is that of Sharaf al-din Ali of Yezd who died in 1456. Sharaf completed his book on the victories of Timur in 1425 from records collected by Timur's grandson Ibrahim Sultan, son of Shah Rukh. The manuscript was copied in 1467 by a celebrated calligraphist called Shir'Ali and presented to Sultan Husayn

---

Footnote 76 cont'd./

Charles Stewart (London, 1830). In the introduction to his translation Stewart explains that the original of this Persian translation was found in the library of Jaafer Pasha of Yemen. There was a person of that name in 1610. This date of the Persian account could be confirmed by the dedication of the work to the Emperor Shah Jehan of Hindustan: see Preface, p. vi. The translated part of the Memoirs covers the first forty-one years of Timur's life. Stewart draws his proofs for the authenticity of this account from a letter written by Major William Davy to Doctor White of the University of Oxford on 24 October 1779: see pp. ix ff.

77. The second memoir is entitled Institutes Political and Military, written originally in the Mogul Language by the Great Timour, improperly called Tamerlane: First translated into Persian by Abu Alhusseini: and thence into English, ... by Major William Davy (Oxford, 1783). The arguments used to prove the authenticity of the document are the same as those used by Stewart which are mentioned above in connection with his translation (see above p. 52, n. 76): see pp. xvii-xxiv.

78. Barthold suspects these memoirs to be a forgery. One of his arguments is that Timur makes too much of his father's and his own participation in the wars of the Qazaghan. If their activities in these wars were so important, why do not the names of Timur and his father appear in the official accounts of the Qazaghan wars? See op. cit., n. 74, vol.2, pp. 13-14 and p. 14, n. 1.

79. One of two original works written during Timur's lifetime is An Indian Diary by Ghiyath al-din Ali. This book, entitled Diary of Timur's Campaign in India (1399), was edited by L. Zimin in 1915 and translated by A. A. Semenov (Moscow, 1958). Hookham says that this account is written in an elegant style but is "heavily charged with verses and pious allusions": see op. cit., n. 70, p. 319. The other account by Nizami al-din Shami, entitled Zafar-Nama or Book of Victory, was published by Tauer (Prague, 1937 and 1956). The original was presented to Timur in 1404, four years after the author joined Timur's court: see Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 319.

William Davy.[77] In spite of the fact that their authenticity is still debated,[78] Hookham and Barthold refer to them occasionally. One of the accounts written by Timur's historians[79] and used by Hookham is that of Sharaf al-din Ali of Yezd who died in 1456. Sharaf completed his book on the victories of Timur in 1425 from records collected by Timur's grandson Ibrahim Sultan, son of Shah Rukh. The manuscript was copied in 1467 by a celebrated calligraphist called Shir'Ali and presented to Sultan Husayn

---

Footnote 76 cont'd./

Charles Stewart (London, 1830). In the introduction to his translation Stewart explains that the original of this Persian translation was found in the library of Jaafer Pasha of Yemen. There was a person of that name in 1610. This date of the Persian account could be confirmed by the dedication of the work to the Emperor Shah Jehan of Hindustan: see Preface, p. vi. The translated part of the Memoirs covers the first forty-one years of Timur's life. Stewart draws his proofs for the authenticity of this account from a letter written by Major William Davy to Doctor White of the University of Oxford on 24 October 1779: see pp. ix ff.

77. The second memoir is entitled Institutes Political and Military, written originally in the Mogul Language by the Great Timour, improperly called Tamerlane; First translated into Persian by Abu Alhusseini: and thence into English, ... by Major William Davy (Oxford, 1783). The arguments used to prove the authenticity of the document are the same as those used by Stewart which are mentioned above in connection with his translation (see above p. 52, n. 76): see pp. xvii-xxiv.

78. Barthold suspects these memoirs to be a forgery. One of his arguments is that Timur makes too much of his father's and his own participation in the wars of the Qazaghan. If their activities in these wars were so important, why do not the names of Timur and his father appear in the official accounts of the Qazaghan wars? See op. cit., n. 74, vol.2, pp. 13-14 and p. 14, n. 1.

79. One of two original works written during Timur's lifetime is An Indian Diary by Ghiyath al-din Ali. This book, entitled Diary of Timur's Campaign in India (1399), was edited by L. Zimin in 1915 and translated by A. A. Semenov (Moscow, 1958). Hookham says that this account is written in an elegant style but is "heavily charged with verses and pious allusions": see op. cit., n. 70, p. 319. The other account by Nizami al-din Shami, entitled Zafar-Nama or Book of Victory, was published by Tauer (Prague, 1937 and 1956). The original was presented to Timur in 1404, four years after the author joined Timur's court: see Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 319.

Bahadur, a descendant of Timur. This work, written in Persian, was translated into Turkish, then into French by Pétis de la Croix[80] and published in Paris in 1722. It was translated into English by J. Darby in 1723.[81] On the whole, critics find this account eulogistic of the career of Timur; much emphasis is laid on Timur's religious zeal. The main diplomatic report written at this time is that entitled Clavijo: Embassy to Tamburlaine. 1403-1406 by the Spanish Gonzalez de Clavijo, published in Spanish in 1582 and translated into English in 1859.[82] Clavijo was an ambassador sent by Henry III, king of Castille, to Timur's court along with a friar, Fray Alfonso de Santa Maria, master in theology and an officer of the royal guard Comez de Salazar. The two officials were present at Timur's court for fifteen months, long enough to know its splendour and the severity of Timur's discipline. However, Clavijo's stay with Timur was relatively short in comparison with Timur's career and his field of observation rather narrow. The most informative of Timur's prisoners was Ahmed Ibn Arabshah. He was taken at the age of twelve by Timur in Damascus and brought to Samarqand

---

80. Pétis de la Croix, L'Histoire du Timur-Bec connu sous le nom du gran Tamerlan, empereur des Mogols et Tartares. En forme de Journal Historique de ses Victoires et Conquêtes dans l'Asie et dans l'Europe. Ecrite en Persan par Cherefeddin Ali, natif d'Yezd, Auteur contemporain (Paris, 1722). 4 vol. The original, entitled Zafar Namey Emir Timur Gourcan, that is, a history of the victories of Lord Timur, son-in-law of the Cham, was translated into Turkish by Hafiz Mehemed Bin Ahmed Alagemi. For further details about this work, see Pétis, vol. 1, pp. xii ff. See also Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, pp. 289-290. Hookham says that this account suffers from inaccuracies. For a discussion on this source, see op. cit., n. 70, pp. 319-320.

81. J. Darby, The History of Timur-Bec, Known by the Name of Tamerlain the Great, Emperor of the Moguls and Tartars: Being an Historical Journal of his Conquests in Asia and Europe. Written in Persian by Cherefeddin Ali, Native of Yezd, his Contemporary (London, 1723), 2 vol.

82. Guy Le Strange, translator, Clavijo: Embassy to Tamerlane: 1403-1406 for the "Broadway Travellers Series" (London, 1928). The title of the Spanish original was Historia del gran Tamerlani e Itinerario y enarracion del viage y Relacion de la embaxada que Ruy Goncalez de Clavijo Chizo por mandado del muy poderoso senor rey don Henrique al tercero de Castilla, ... (Sevilla, 1582): see Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, p. xxxi. This work was first translated into English for the Hakluyt Society by Clements Markham in 1859: see Le Strange, p. v.

where he lived many years in captivity. His work, written in Arabic,[83] was eventually translated into French by Pierre Vattier in 1658[84] and finally into English by J. H. Sanders in 1936.[85] As may be expected, Arabshah is hostile to Timur. Nevertheless, when his account is compared with that of Sharaf al-din, Arabshah's information proves to be broadly objective and makes his work an important source of material about Timur. Another of Timur's prisoners was Johann Schiltberger.[86] He is believed to have come of a noble family. He left home in 1394 with his master Leonard Richartinger and was ten months in Hungary where his lord was in all probability serving in the auxiliary forces under Sigismund. He was taken prisoner at the age of fifteen by Bajazet at the battle of Nicopolis in 1596 and escaped the general massacres after the battle only through the timely intervention of Bajazet's eldest son. He was then employed as a personal attendant and runner by his captor. When Bajazet was defeated at Ankara, Schiltberger became a prisoner of Timur and was then passed on to his sons after Timur's death. Schiltberger was illiterate and supposedly dictated from memory the information he had accumulated during the period from 1394 until his

---

83. Ahmed ibn Arabshah wrote Adjab al-Makdur fi Nawab Timur. This work was subsequently translated into Latin by Golius in 1636, then into French by Pierre Vattier: see below, n. 84. Another Latin translation by Samuel Manger was entitled Ahmedis Arabsiadae (Leovardiae, 1767 and 1772). For further details on this work, see Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, Preface, p. v; Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, p. 290; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 320.

84. Pierre Vattier, L'Histoire dv Grand Tamerlan divisée en sept livres. Contenant l'origine, la vie, et la mort de ce fameux Conquérant ... Bound with this translation is another of Arabshah's works, also translated by Pierre Vattier entitled Portrait dv Grand Tamerlan, avec la svite de son histoire iusques à l'establissement de l'Empire du Mogol, ... (Paris, 1658).

85. J. H. Sanders, Tamerlane or Timur the Great Amir (London, 1936).

86. Johann Schiltberger's account was translated for the Hakluyt Society by J. Buchan Telfer and entitled The Bondage and Travels of Johann Schiltberger, a native of Bavaria, in Europe, Asia, and Africa, 1396-1427 (London, 1879). The translation was made from the Heidelberg manuscript edited in 1859 by Karl Friedrich Neumann.

escape in 1427. In spite of his having a marvellous memory, there are certain inaccuracies. Nevertheless, J. Buchan Telfer values the account of this honest-minded Bavarian.[87] However, Hookham considers the book to be "a mixture of distorted recollections and camp gossip; a subjective but important narrative, from a point of view exactly opposite to that of the court historians".[88] Another contemporary of Timur was Ibn Khaldun, a most famous Arabian historian and philosopher. Khaldun met Timur in Damascus at the time of the siege in 1401[89] and was astonished by the amount of knowledge in history and sciences displayed by Timur in spite of his illiteracy. Timur tried in vain to persuade Khaldun to join his court.[90] Finally, Jean Hayton[91] included the story of Timur among other tales related in his book.

The two main references used in this outline of Timur's career are those of Sharaf al-din and Arabshah. Other references are also noted in the footnotes as the occasion arises and according to the use made of them by Hookham, Lamb, or Barthold.

Timur was born in 1336 in a town called Kesh, a few miles from Samarqand. He was known as Tamur, a word which, in the Arabic, means "it shall shake",[92] but more generally as Timur, a word which means "iron" or

---

87. Telfer, op. cit., n. 86, pp. xvii-xxii, and notes.

88. Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 321.

89. See ibid., pp. 82, 234 ff.

90. See ibid., pp. 78, 236-238. See also Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 1, p. 60 and vol. 2, p. 23.

91. Jean Hayton, Les Fleurs des histoires de la terre dorient Compillees par frere Hayton seigneur du Cort et cousin germain du roy Darmenie par le commandement du pape. (1501?) Part V. It was translated into French by Nicholas Salcon (Paris, 1475).

92. Timur is said to have been named by a certain holy Moslem shaykh to whom his father brought the child and who happened then to be reading a verse in the Koran ending with the word "Tamur". This verse runs as follows: "What! are ye sure that He who is in Heaven will not cleave the Earth beneath you? And lo, it shall shake": sura 67: 16. See The Koran, translated and edited by J. M. Rodwell (London, 1974 reprinted ed.), p. 143. See also Stewart, op. cit.,n. 76, p. 21; Le Strange, op. cit., n. 82, p. 342, n. 2.

"the edge of iron".[93] Both names were well suited to the future warrior whose dedication to the sword was to shake the world with terror. He belonged to one of the four major tribes of the territory, the Barlas, a clan of Mongolian ancestry of which he became the leader or prince in 1360.[94] According to some sources, his father appears to have been a noble of small estate, closely connected with the nobility of Samarqand.[95] Very little is known of the first twenty-five years of Timur's life. Barthold observes that if Timur's memoirs are authentic, he keeps a strange silence regarding this early period. This raises questions about the nature of his activities during his youth[96] and one senses that Timur's early exploits obviously contributed nothing to the image of grandeur and magnificence he wished to present before the world. Pétis, Sharaf's translator, devotes approximately thirty pages out of his four volumes to this period of Timur's youth; in these, he describes mainly the political rivalries of the times and dwells very little on the activities of Timur himself.[97] Barthold notes Arabshah's disparaging remarks about Timur as a young man,[98] that he was the captain of ruffians, full of deceit, who persecuted the East and the West, and that he and his father were humble labourers without sense or religion.[99]

---

93. For other omens which predicted Timur's career to be that of a warring conqueror, see Sanders, op. cit., n. 85, p. 1; Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 4.

94. See Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 1, p. 57. A. Z. Togan has shown that the Chingiz Khan of the Moguls and Timur had a claim to one common ancestor, Buzanchar: see ibid., p. 68, n. But Timur does not appear to have been a direct descendant of Chingiz Khan: see ibid., p. 58.

95. Opinions vary about the social status of Timur's father. Lamb says he came from a line of men distinguished in war but poor: see op. cit., n. 73, p. 21. Sanders explains that Taragai, Timur's father, was the great grandson of Karachar Nevien, who was commander-in-chief under Jagatai, the son of Jenghizkhan: see op. cit., n. 85, p. xvi. See also Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 7; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 41.

96. See Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 2, p. 13.

97. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, pp. 1-29.

98. See Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 2, p. 13.

99. See Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, pp. 3-4.

Apparently, these straight circumstances and his drive for power impelled Timur to become a thief and a robber. He thus secured means and a following, both necessary to acquire the control of the region where he lived. Clavijo admits he heard, during his diplomatic mission, that Timur used to go robbing every day during his youth until he had a number of men large enough to become a threat to the Sultan.[100] Whatever the facts might have been for this period of his life, Timur admits they were difficult years. His great problem was to secure the loyalty of the warlords.[101] Battles, captivity, and wounds were his lot. When he finally became the leader of his clan, injuries had made him a cripple for the rest of his life.[102] His enemies, out of contempt, gave him the vituperative nickname "Timur-i-lang", the equivalent of "Timur the Lame", the Persian word "lang" meaning "lame". This composite name gradually evolved into the familiar forms of "Tamerlane" or "Tamburlaine" as he is commonly referred to today.

As was mentioned before, Timur's rise to power was anything but smooth.[103] His greatest obstacle was the Sultan Emir Hussein. The relation-

---

100. See Le Strange, op. cit., n. 82, pp. 210-211.

101. See Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, pp. 31 ff.

102. Details about his disabilities vary. Arabshah says that Timur was wounded by an arrow in his shoulder and in his hip while stealing sheep from a neighbour and remained crippled, that is, "estropié": see Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 4. Timur, in Davy, mentions receiving an arrow in his arm and foot: see op. cit., n. 77, p. 47. Lamb mentions that his foot was injured in the same way: see op. cit., n. 73, p. 25, n. 1. Timur's tomb was opened in 1941 by the Soviet Archaeological Commission which confirmed that he was lame in both right limbs: see Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 9. Barthold adds the detail that the bones of his hip joint were knitted together: see op. cit., n. 74, vol. 2, p. 17, n. 5. "Feats of personal valour were ascribed to Timur in spite of his physical disability": ibid., p. 29. Ibn Khaldun mentions Timur's lameness; see Hookham, op. cit. n. 70, p. 83.

103. See Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, pp. 31 ff. "Timur had to overcome several rivals in bitterly contested struggles before he became the veritable sovereign of his people": Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 2, p. 26.

ship between the two men went through all the possible shades of friendship and enmity. After many stormy episodes, Timur was able to negotiate an alliance with Hussein and marry his sister Turcan Aga.[104] However, later when she died, Timur felt freed from any bonds of loyalty towards his brother-in-law and, consequently, he appears to have instigated the murder of Hussein.[105] By marrying Hussein's widow, Saray-Mulk-khatum, the daughter of the Chaghatay Khan of Mawarannahr, Timur became connected with the royal house of Chaghatay and was able, at last, to gain precedence over the other emirs[106] of the Mogols.[107] He now became known as the "Gurgan"

---

104. Her name is cited in Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 48. Timur is strangely reticent about his first wife in his memoirs: see Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, pp. 62 ff. Arabshah has an unusual comment to make about her. Timur supposedly won the Sultan Hussein's favour, married his sister who held him in disdain for "la bassesse et pauureté de son origine": Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 6. According to the same author, Timur killed her, had to run in hiding and resort once again to pillage and robbery: see ibid. Barthold discredits the report that Timur killed his own wife: see op. cit., n. 74, vol. 2, p. 18, n. 2. See also below, n. 105.

105. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 50. Timur refrains from offering any explanation about Hussein's death, as shows his following vague statement. "And that befel him which did befall him": see Davy, op. cit., n. 77, p. 109. Barthold suggests that the murder of Hussein was given the appearance of being lawful. He explains that the actual killing was done according to the right of vendetta recognized in Islam by one whose brother Hussein had slain ten years previously. Two years later, Hussein's murderer was himself slain according to the same law of vendetta invoked by men who had the right to avenge the blood of Hussein: see op. cit., n. 74 vol. 1, pp. 57-58. Oddly enough, Hussein was Timur's main rival and his assassin was later accused of betraying Timur. These two murders occurred at very opportune moments with regard to Timur's plans of overtaking power: see ibid., p. 58.

106. See Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 1, p. 58. See also Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 50.

107. Barthold explains that Timur exploited for his own purposes the concept and traditions of Mongolian rule and especially of the Chaghatays who formed his main military force. On the whole, they had much more affinity with the Mongols than with the Moslems. The traditions of Islam held second place only in Timur's mind as compared with Mongolian military traditions, though he cleverly used them to justify his military initiatives and add splendour to his throne: see op. cit., n. 74, vol. 1, p. 58.

or son-in-law of the Khan. This is as close as he came to the title of "khan" or "emperor", a title which he never strictly claimed for himself, being content with that of "emir" or "lord". Nevertheless, Timur kept the puppet khan of the royal house in bondage and used him as a figurehead to cloak his own acts with imperial authority.[108] Thus, without formally claiming for himself the title of emperor,[109] Timur reached a position where he could exercise full imperial power. He was now thirty-four. Once Timur had power it was imperative that he secure the support of all the Moslem social groups. He relates himself how he set out to win over the military leaders one by one, in varied ways, by coercion, bribes, and promises,[110] according to the type and situation of the leader himself. He also assured himself of the co-operation of merchants, craftsmen, and agricultural tribes, as all were needed for their ware.

According to his own accounts and those of his historians, religion was a major factor for Timur in the exercise of his rule. He very soon understood that it was of prime importance that he have the approval of the Moslem "sayyids", both for his own moral reassurance and to appear favourable in the eyes of his subjects. One of the first venerable sages to be adopted as a constant spiritual adviser and companion was the Sayyid Baraka of the Moslem creed who previously had forecast a great future for the Emir.[111] According to tradition, Timur always kept several such spiritual advisers throughout his career, although Barthold says their influence on Timur's activities was small.[112] Nevertheless, Clavijo reports that Timur took pride

---

108. See Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 1, p. 58.

109. Pétis relates how Timur induced his entourage to honour him, in ceremony if not in deed, as their emperor: see op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 203.

110. See Davy, op. cit., n. 77, pp. 109 ff.

111. See Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 1, p. 59; Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, p. 7; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 49.

112. See above, p. 59, n. 107.

in being an orthodox Moslem.[113] Eye-witnesses report that Timur was a monotheist, worshipped Allah, the only God, and was tolerant of any other religion provided it was not idolatrous. Timur's historians say that he was faithful to most of the forms of the Moslem faith, that is, to ablutions and prayers, notably to the rites observed on Fridays, and the Ramadan fast. He prostrated himself publicly before battles to plead for Divine aid and after victories in a spirit of thanksgiving.[114] He gave generously to the poor, built hospitals and monasteries.[115] Timur abstained from wine and pork as well as from gambling and practices of usury, but he could easily bend these rules when the observation of them impeded his plans. Thus, he had as many as eight wives, some authors say nine,[116] besides his concubines, when the Moslem rule normally allowed for four. Clavijo was present at Timur's last wedding at the age of seventy.[117] Timur visited the shrines of Noah,[118] and others,[119] on his way to and fro from his campaigns, shrines to which he is supposed to have given generously. However, there is no question anywhere of Timur having made pilgrimages to the holy cities of the Moslems.[120] Yet, the image of Timur, which emerges from the historical accounts, bears several religious traits.

There is a sense of Divine mission and destiny about Timur as well as

---

113. See Le Strange, op. cit., n. 82, p. 16. See also Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, Preface, sig. e. ii; Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 2.

114. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 2, pp. 114-115 and 121; vol. 4, p. 8, There is frequent mention of such prayers in Vattier. See also Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 77 and 138.

115. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, Preface, sig. e. iii. See also Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 152.

116. Ellis-Fermor mentions nine wives: see ed. cit., n. 4, p. 21. Le Strange mentions eight: see op. cit., n. 82, p. 12. Hayton, whose account is already interspersed with much legendary material, says he had four: see op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxiv, col. (b). According to him, Tamburlan was "quasi bon chrestien": see ibid.

117. See Le Strange, op. cit., n. 82, p. 12.

118. Schiltberger mentions the mountain upon which Noah's ark stood: see op. cit., n. 86, p. 44. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, p. 313.

119. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 329. See also Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 152; Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, p. 285.

120. See Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, p. 285.

one of total dedication. Timur's historians compare his mission to those of Joseph and Mahomet.[121] Divines told him very early in his career that he was meant to conquer. Several passages in Arabshah ascribe this trait to Timur in spite of the author's bitter antagonism towards him.[122] The eulogizing Sharaf al-din and the resentful Arabshah both perceive Timur as a special instrument chosen by God,[123] tireless in his pursuits and never

---

121. Timur, Joseph of the Old Testament, and Mahomet the Prophet had premonitions of great events in which they were to be the main actors: see Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 70. The same author explains this idea still further in the following words:

> "Lorsque Dieu veut une chose, il en dispose les causes, afin qu'elle arrive de la manière qu'il a résolu; il avait destiné à Timur et à sa postérité l'Empire de l'Asie, parcequ'il prevoyait la douceur de son Gouvernement, qui devait rendre les Peuples heureux. Tout ce qui est arrivé dans le cours de la fortune de ce prince, a été si extraordinaire, que les esprits les plus prudens et les mieux éclairés ne l'ont jamais pû comprendre: tout lui est arrivé à souhait par la Providence divine, qui avait résolu de lui mettre la couronne sur la tête".

See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, pp. 179-180. Arabshah speaks much in the same manner: 'Quand la fortune fauorise un homme et supplée à sa faiblesse, il n'a qu'à entreprendre ce qu'il a en l'esprit; la destinée le conduit et la prouidence l'enseigne": see Vattier, op. cit., n. 84 p. 5, He adds elsewhere: "Certes il est indubitable, que ce boiteux estoit ou guidé du Ciel, ou destiné aux supplices eternels par le mauvais vsage qu'il deuoit faire des felicitez temporelles":see op.cit.,n.84,Portrait.p. 12. Whatever might be the worth of Timur in the eyes of these two chroniclers,both have to admit the extraordinary dimension of this historical figure. In Stewart, Timur explains that God made him "the Shepherd of his flock" and assisted him with celestial aid to the high pre-eminence of Sovereignty: see op. cit., n. 76, p. 4.

122. See Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, sig. e iii.

123. Expressions like the following occur frequently in Pétis's translation: "Comme la Providence avait destiné la Couronne à Timur ...": op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 140. Or, again: "Et comme la prospérité de Timur était une affaire du Ciel, à qui toute la vigueur humaine et le courage le plus héroïque n'aurait pu résister, ...": ibid., p. 350. In the foreword to his account, the author explains how God distributes crowns as he pleases,

> "accorde les Victoires à ceux qu'il reconnaît les plus propres à accomplir ses volontés éternelles; c'est lui qui soutient et élève continuellement le Mahométisme, pour l'accroissement de sa gloire, et il est certain qu'une fortune élevée de sa main est inébranlable, et résiste sans peine à tous les événemens qui tendent à la détruire. Telle fut celle du grand et invincible Timur, ...":

cont'd./

allowing himself nor his troops a very prolonged rest. There was even more than this sense of destiny about this warrior. Throughout his career, Timur let it be known that he received direct revelations from the Almighty.[124] He tells of numerous prophetic dreams in his Memoirs.[125] Timur apparently could foretell the future.[126] This gift was easily compatible with the belief that he was in close relation with Allah and allowed him to claim divine sanction for all his enterprises. He held to the idea that he undertook nothing without the special commandment of God.[127] Moreover, an angel was supposed to reveal to him the inner thoughts and cogitations of men, a powerful tool to discover secret plots against his life[128] or to get rid of any hostile presence in his entourage. Because of these powers, Timur was accused of delving in the black arts.[129]

Footnote no. 123 cont'd./

ibid., sig. e i v. Sharaf al-din explains how divinely-destined heroes draw their needed strength to accomplish their mission.

> "Les Héros qui sont destinés à l'exécution des grands événements, sont aussi doués d'un esprit pénétrant qui leur fait paraître de la facilité dans les entreprises, et des lumières pour les pousser avec la force et la puissance qu'ils ont; en sorte qu'ils viennent aisément à bout des choses que tout le monde regarde comme impossible":

ibid., vol. 3, p. 279. See also above, p. 62, n. 121. Timur considers he is the instrument chosen by God to punish tyrants like Bajazet; see Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 246.

124. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 78.

125. See Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, pp. 14 and 20; see also Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, sig. e iii v - e iiii, and p. 19.

126. In Pétis, the author explains that "les paroles des grands hommes sont souvent les oracles du destin": op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 109. Pétis notes that in several instances Sharaf al-din tried to prove that Timur had the gift of prophecy: see ibid., p. 305.

127. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 422.

128. Arabshah notes how shrewd and clear-sighted Timur was in such matters; see Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, Portrait..., p. 3. See also Hookham op. cit., n. 70, p. 78.

129. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 78.

For political reasons and as a means of assuring for himself the support of the people, Timur had to develop strong links with the Moslem clergy.[130] Each military engagement was endorsed by the holy men who accompanied him in order that his campaigns be coloured as holy wars.[131] This was important for his men as an incentive to fight. According to the teachings of Mahomet, the highest dignity a man could achieve was to make war on the enemies of the Moslem religion.[132] Central Asia, Asia Minor, large areas of Africa all belonged to the Moslem faith, but not all to the same sect. The two main ones were the Shi'ah and the Sunni. The first, to which Timur belonged, at least when it suited his purposes, was found mainly in the Persian territory[133] while the second, of which Bajazet was

---

130. See Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 1, p. 59. Timur explains that he gave currency to the Islamic faith as a means of procuring stability to his government, for "every Sovereignty that is not supported by religion soon loses all authority, and its orders are not obeyed, ...": see Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, p. 5. See also Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 50 and 77.

131. Wars especially fought for the Moslem faith were considered to be holy wars and were called by the special name of "Gazié": see Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, p. 9, n. These were thought to be a means of expiation for one's failings (see Pétis, ibid., vol. 4, p. 199) and a source of eternal merit for the one killed in the course of one of these: see ibid., p. 205. This would explain Timur's eagerness to launch his last campaign against China towards the end of his career, and that, in spite of his old age and failing health: see Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 79; see also below, n. 132.

132. Moslems believed that God had asked Mahomet to incite his followers to wage war against the enemies of religion "parce que c'est de toutes les actions la plus excellente et que l'Alcoran met au-dessus de tous les autres hommes ceux qui risquent leurs biens et leurs vies dans une pareille guerre": Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 394; also ibid., vol. 2, p. 21 n. (a) and vol. 3, p. 11. See also Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 188-189. For further details about holy wars, see below, p. 314 and n. 243; pp. 315-316 and p. 315, n. 248.

133. The Shi'ah sect was found mostly in Persia (See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 2, p. 151, n. (a).) or among the Tartars: see Telfer, op. cit. n. 86, p. 156, n. 3. Timur is believed to have been a Shiite because of his destructive attitude towards the Sunnite Aleppo and Damascus; see Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, p. [9]. For Timur's crafty use of religious factions in Islam, see Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 79, 143 and 227 ff. For further details about these sects, see below, pp. 213ff.

an adherent, prevailed in Egypt and Arabia.[134] As may be expected, doctrinal disputes, differences in the religious heritage of Islam, fed the greed for territorial claims and supplied excuses to Timur to raise the cry of battle and carry on his campaigns.[135]

Timur's Islamic allegiances in the course of his campaigns are not always clear-cut nor are they always consistent. This is especially evident in the motives he uses to carry out wars in regions other than his home territory. At one time in Syria, he assumes the role of avenger for the wrongs inflicted upon the Shi'ites, that is, upon members of the Prophet's house, by the Sunnites and is, therefore, considered a fervent Shi'ite. On another occasion, in Shi'ite territory, he becomes the avenger of insults made by Shi'ites against the Sunnites and, as a result, is considered to be a Sunnite.[136] Another instance of Timur's shifting religious allegiances is shown in his varying attitudes towards the Christians. As a Moslem, he unscrupulously destroys the Christians of Georgia on the excuse that they are idolaters, but, at other times, he readily ignores his duty as a Moslem and takes sides with the Christians of Europe when the time comes to strike against Bajazet and the Ottoman Empire whom, by Moslem standards, he is bound to defend against any attacks made by idolaters or Christians.[137] Yet, in general, he is said to have spared the Sunnites whom

---

134. The Sunni were the sect of the Ottoman Empire and of the Mogols of India: see Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 2, p. 151, n. (b). They considered themselves as belonging to the true orthodox Moslem religion: see ibid., p. 151. They looked upon the Shi'ites as apostates: see Telfer, op. cit., n. 86, p. 156, n. 3. On the differences between the two sects, see below, pp. 219 ff. and 233.

135. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 79.

136. See Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 1, p. 59, and vol 2, p. 23.

137. Timur was not a devout Moslem; he followed his own ideas. He never accepted an Islamic (devout) surname for himself or for his sons. He was considered a pagan by other Moslems and was a soldier before being a religious man. Relations with other religions were determined by the political circumstances of the times: see Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, pp. 284-285. See also Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 2, p. 30.

he recognized as the real descendants of Mahomet.[138] Perhaps this explains why, according to eye-witnesses, he is said to have treated Bajazet with courtesy, respect, and compassion.[139] Thus, as Barthold explains, while Timur made a show of being a fervent Moslem, in practice, he seems to have used the various Moslem sects and religion in general as instruments of policy.[140]

The fact that Timur associated his ambitions with religious arguments like the following: "Just as there is only one God in heaven, so the earth can support only one King", or "The Sultan is the shadow of Allah on earth",[141] justified the claim that a close relationship existed between the God of heaven and his ruler or god on earth. Throughout his campaigns, he is said to have relied heavily on the help of God, more than on the multitude of his armies.[142] Timur loved to be compared to the great historical or

---

138. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, pp. 84 ff. Timur says of himself that he paid particular respect to the descendants of the Prophet: see Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, p. 6. See also Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 79 and 143-144.

139. See below, p. 77, notes 198 and 199.

140. See Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 1, pp. 58-59; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 77 and 79.

141. The idea of one God and, therefore, of one king occurs rather frequently in the references used in this study. It seems to be an essential belief of the Moslem tradition. In Pétis, we find the following words: "Comme la Royauté, selon Mahomet, est l'ombre de Dieu qui est seul, elle ne se peut partager, non plus qu'il ne peut y avoir deux Lunes dans le meme ciel": op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 180. Elsewhere, kings are spoken of in this way: "Les Docteurs ont appellé les Rois l'Ombre de Dieu, et ont reconnu que le rang des Souverains est comme un rayon de la Divinité ...": ibid., vol. 4, p. 288. See also Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, pp. 1 and 7. The crown seemed destined to Timur by Divine Providence: see Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, pp. 180 and 311. See also Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, p. 84; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 103 and 183. Timur claimed the sole right to kingship. He is supposed to have said the following words: "The whole expanse of the world is not large enough to have two kings". According to Barthold, only "a morbid mania" could inspire such words: see op. cit., n. 74, vol. 1, p. 60.

142. Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, pp. 64-65; vol. 2, p. 114; vol. 3, pp. 26 and 281; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 138 and 224.

religious figures. One of his conquered generals is said to have esteemed Timur to be "wise as Solomon and great as Alexander".[143] In this way, in the eyes of his contemporaries, Timur could measure himself with the best of the religious world of Israel and the military world of antiquity.

Timur, reputed to be as wise as Solomon and as great as Alexander, had a physique to match this greatness. Even though he was lame, his appearance commanded respect. Eye-witnesses agree that he was of a perfect build, tall, of a lofty stature, lean, strong and of much endurance. His head was large, splendidly poised, with a high forehead and full dark eyes, of pale complexion, not dark as those of his race were expected to be.[144] Arabshah, his enemy, likens him to the remnants of the Amalekites, with eyes like candles, and a powerful voice.[145] He had an unusual love of colour and splendour. Throughout his account, Clavijo describes the awe and wonder he experienced before the size, the elaborate structure, and the colours of Timur's tents, before the profusion of jewels used to set off the reds, the whites, and the golds of the rich fabrics used as curtains and draperies, and before Timur's sumptuous feasts.[146]

Although Timur was illiterate,[147] he loved to surround himself with

---

143. Pétis; op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 425; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 113.

144. On Timur's formidable appearance when in wrath, see Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 4, p. 120; Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, Portrait..., pp. 1-4; Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, p. 27. On the findings of the Soviet Archaeological Commission, see Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 9 and 83-84.

145. See Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, Portrait..., pp. 1-2. This passage is referred to in Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 83-84.

146. See Le Strange, op. cit., n. 82, pp. 217, 223-225, etc.

147. Sir Thomas W. Arnold explains the illiteracy of one of Timur's descendants in India, Nur ud-Din Muhammed Jakangir Shah Akbar as follows: "It is probable that his admirers exaggerated his independence of the common methods of acquiring learning, in order to emphasize his claim to divine guidance"; see Bihzad and His Paintings in the 'Zafar-Namah' MS (London, 1930), p. 3. In a Moslem context, illiteracy could be considered almost as an asset equally shared by Mahomet and Timur.

the best scholars of his day. Throughout his life, he manifested great interest in learning: philosophy, theology, astrology, and especially history. His knowledge in history and science astonished Ibn Khaldun when he met him at the time of siege of Damascus.[148] Timur took delight in discussing points of religious doctrine and in playing chess. Astrologers accompanied him everywhere but he willingly ignored their advice if that suited his purpose. He spoke Turkish or Mogul and Persian. The edifices whose construction he supervised were silent witnesses to Timur's artistic concepts, especially in his home city of Samarqand.[149]

With religious zeal as a cover and imperialistic ambition as a drive, Timur could aspire to the conquest of the world. He was already animated with such aspirations in 1370 when he became ruler of Samarqand.[150] In general his large-scale campaigns were characterized by massive pillage and slaughter,[151] usually signalled by the raising of a black ensign,[152] and by his cruel practices and his destructive instincts.[153] Timur looted all the conquered cities, took their treasures, robbed them of their scholars and craftsmen, all to the benefit of Samarqand which he wanted to make the capital of the world, a centre for the Islamic faith and an object of pilgrimage dedicated to the cult of "the Living King".[154] Here he built the

---

148. See Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 1, p. 60. See also Walter J. Fischel, ed., Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane: Their Historic Meeting in Damascus, 1401 A.D. (803 A.H.). A Study Based on Arabic manuscripts of Ibn Khaldun's 'Autobiography', with a translation into English, and a commentary. (Los Angeles, 1952). Ibn Khaldun found Timur highly intelligent and very perspicacious, "addicted to debate and argumentation about what he knows and also about what he does not know": p. 47.

149. See Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 1, pp. 60-61. See also below, p. 70 , n. 157. See also below, p. 72.

150. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, pp. 203 and 311.

151. See Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 1, p. 60. See below, p. 69 , n. 156 and p. 70, n. 157.

152. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 59.

153. Instances of cruelty and pointless destruction are too numerous to mention. A few are noted in Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, pp. 89 and 90; Schiltberger, op. cit., n. 86, pp. 27-28; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 107. See below, p. 69, n. 156 and p. 70, n. 157.

154. Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 178. See also Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 1, p. 60.

great Cathedral Mosque with the bulbous domes copied from the ones he had seen in Damascus before destroying the city, an architectural feature which the Russians were to adopt in their Byzantine buildings, and the Indians in the erection of the Taj Mahal built on the orders of one of Timur's descendants.[155] Eye-witnesses report that, among the several massive massacres Timur conducted, the one at Ispahan, where he ordered the children to be led out of the city and be trampled down by his horsemen, stands out as an instance of his direst cruelty.[156] Destruction and ruin were the aftermaths of his passage through any territory especially in outlying areas in

---

155. See Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, pp. 14 and 194.

156. Schiltberger mentions a like massacre supposed to have taken place in Ispahan during which the women and children were taken to a plain outside the city. Some seven thousand children under the age of seven were then separated and placed apart. In spite of insistent pleas on the part of the mothers and of the elders of the city to spare their lives, Timur ordered his horsemen to trample them down. Upon the refusal of his men to comply with his orders, Schiltberger says that Timur launched himself upon these children, his men then following suit: see op. cit., n. 86, pp. 27-28. Similar incidents are related in Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 49, and repeated in Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 220. Instances of Timur's cruel practices occur frequently in accounts of his career especially in those by chroniclers inimical to him like Arabshah or Schiltberger. They tell of the treacherous practice of burying people alive to comply with the promise previously made of not shedding blood when they would surrender. (See Clavijo, op. cit., n. 82, p. 133; Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 125; Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxv, col. a); of throwing enemies down in wells and filling these up again (See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, p. 268); of setting churches on fire after having filled them up with the unwanted among the defeated enemy, as was the fate of those imprisoned in the great Mosque of Damascus (See Schiltberger, op. cit., n. 86, p. 23; Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxvii, col. b), a cruel-deed which Sharaf al-din tries to play down by saying that Timur attempted to save that Mosque (See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, p. 346); of his pyramids of skulls (See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 360; vol. 3, p. 370; Schiltberger, op. cit., n. 86, pp.23 and 27-28; Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 180; Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, pp. 198, 216 and 280-281.). Timur's autobiographical accounts hush down these practices and attempt to create rather the image of a leader guided by equity and justice. Deeds of cruelty of this nature occur less frequently in Pétis's account than they do in those of Timur's enemies.

which he feared uprisings and retaliation. His campaigns are described as nothing but plundering raids. As a matter of fact, Timur's constructive initiatives as a ruler were very few in places other than in Samarqand.[157]

Timur was a master in the use of military strategy. He was little concerned with following long-term plans for his campaigns nor for dealing with any large geographical regions in any particular campaign.[158] This gave him free rein to follow his whims, to put spontaneous decisions and tactics into effect, to change his plans radically at the very last minute, and to make any information which spies might have obtained about his moves absolutely useless. But once an order or a signal had been given, he had the reputation of never changing his mind.[159] This gave power to his authority and, to his decisions, "something of the immutability of fate".[160] Timur could control his huge military machine with utmost speed and precision. His camp appeared as the perfect pattern of a well-ordered large city.[161]. Timur's armies were "as numerous as the leaves of the trees and the sands of the desert",[162] so large that it took him two days to review

---

157. The grandiose works of irrigation in distant Kabul and the Mughan steppe are an exception: see Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 1, p. 60. Barthold explains how Timur displayed very few constructive initiatives outside of Samarqand and never attempted to colonize conquered territories as a means of subduing the inhabitants except on one occasion towards the end of his career; see ibid., p. 61.

158. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 63.

159. Timur, in the Stewart version of his memoirs, boasts that he has always been faithful to his promises: see op. cit., n. 76, p. 5. For his reputation of constancy of purpose, see Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, Portrait ... , pp. 3 and 16; Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, pp. 70 and 84; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 84.

160. Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, p. 70.

161. Timur's military discipline was such that the army kept silence while on duty or on the march. They were thus ready to respond immediately to signals given by the leader: see Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxiiii v,col. b. Pétis says that Timur's camp was so vast that should one lose the location of his tent, he would take a long time to find it again: see op. cit., n. 80, vol. 2, p. 129. Clavijo notes that his camp resembled a city with its 50,000 tents; see op. cit., n. 82, p. 13.

162. Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 136, See also Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 2, p. 97; Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, pp. 99. Similar comparisons to suggest the multitude of Timur's soldiers are frequently used in these accounts.

all his troops.[163] Yet, within minutes after an order was given, each was in his assigned position ready for action. The troops moved then "like the turbulent ocean";[164] the helmets were so polished that they dazzled the sight.[165] Timur's generals revered him like a god; they would kneel and kiss the earth before him in sign of homage, recite the traditional prayer for the emperor, exalt his power and vow obedience unto death.[166] He rewarded his soldiers generously with riches and feasts. He celebrated one of his victories with banquets and music for a whole month.[167]

The list of Timur's campaigns is far too long to describe here. In general, it may be said that he began by subduing all the important cities in his home territory, especially those whose rebellious dispositions threatened to disrupt his plans. Each campaign was endorsed by the advice of holy men who accompanied him. Khorazan was one of the major cities to be subdued. Timur is supposed to have taken advantage of a rebellion against the two rival brothers who were disputing the rule of the city.[168]

---

163. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 134.

164. Ibid., p. 137. See also Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 2, p. 113; vol. 3, p. 264; Timur's armies are compared to a torrential current or to grasshoppers spread out over the territory: see Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 126. They are frequently referred to as being as vast as the sea: see ibid., p. 231; Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, p. 260. They are also like the drops from a heavy cloud: see Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 126. They are described as a great noise and tumult capable of moving mountains: see ibid., p. 186.

165. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 137. See also Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, p. 295.

166. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, pp. 67-68; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 133.

167. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 139-140. Clavijo was obviously impressed by the sumptuous feasts he attended during his stay at Timur's court; see above, p. 67. In Pétis, Sharaf al-din mentions these feasts: see op. cit., n. 80, vol. 2., p. 422. He also notes the famous one at which the captured Bajazet was present: see ibid., vol. 4, pp. 35 ff. See also Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, pp. 126-127. Rewards are mentioned in Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 205.

168. Clavijo records that Timur, at this time, took advantage of a discord between two brothers, lords of Khorazan, and took sides with those rebelling against them: see op. cit., n. 82, p. 213.

all his troops.[163] Yet, within minutes after an order was given, each was in his assigned position ready for action. The troops moved then "like the turbulent ocean";[164] the helmets were so polished that they dazzled the sight.[165] Timur's generals revered him like a god; they would kneel and kiss the earth before him in sign of homage, recite the traditional prayer for the emperor, exalt his power and vow obedience unto death.[166] He rewarded his soldiers generously with riches and feasts. He celebrated one of his victories with banquets and music for a whole month.[167]

The list of Timur's campaigns is far too long to describe here. In general, it may be said that he began by subduing all the important cities in his home territory, especially those whose rebellious dispositions threatened to disrupt his plans. Each campaign was endorsed by the advice of holy men who accompanied him. Khorazan was one of the major cities to be subdued. Timur is supposed to have taken advantage of a rebellion against the two rival brothers who were disputing the rule of the city.[168]

---

163. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 134.

164. Ibid., p. 137. See also Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 2, p. 113; vol. 3, p. 264; Timur's armies are compared to a torrential current or to grasshoppers spread out over the territory: see Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 126. They are frequently referred to as being as vast as the sea: see ibid., p. 231; Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, p. 260. They are also like the drops from a heavy cloud: see Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 126. They are described as a great noise and tumult capable of moving mountains: see ibid., p. 186.

165. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 137. See also Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, p. 295.

166. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, pp. 67-68; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 133.

167. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 139-140. Clavijo was obviously impressed by the sumptuous feasts he attended during his stay at Timur's court; see above, p. 67. In Pétis, Sharaf al-din mentions these feasts: see op. cit., n. 80, vol. 2., p. 422. He also notes the famous one at which the captured Bajazet was present: see ibid., vol. 4, pp. 35 ff. See also Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, pp. 126-127. Rewards are mentioned in Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 205.

168. Clavijo records that Timur, at this time, took advantage of a discord between two brothers, lords of Khorazan, and took sides with those rebelling against them: see op. cit., n. 82, p. 213.

Its inhabitants were subjected to wholesale slaughter and massacre, as were several cities of the area. Having cleared away these threats, Timur then concentrated on the major obstacles to his expansionist policy. Persia was the first target. He used the pretext that it was necessary to re-establish peace and order after the disturbances caused by its political upheavals.[169] Conquest followed upon conquest so that by 1380, Timur was lord of Persia; by 1390, he ruled Muscovy and, by 1398, North-West India. He was by now Lord of all the world.

Because of his role in Marlowe's play, special attention should perhaps be given at this point to the historical account of Bajazet's fall at the hands of Timur. In 1400, Europe was in a very sore plight. Timur, already an old man of sixty-four, had nothing but contempt for the European powers, principally because of the image of weakness, dissent, and total lack of military efficiency which they presented to the East.[170] Religious and political issues were the basis of their divisions. It was the era of the schism in papacy, with one Pope in Rome, another in Avignon and, politically, the Christian princes were at odds with one another. None of them had sufficient leadership to be able to consolidate the Christian military forces into a unit strong enough to face their common enemy, the Moslems. Constantinople, for a long time tossed about by palace plots and conspiracies, had been a prey to the Turkish Sultan Bajazet. In vain, had the Christian forces, in response to the appeals made by the Emperor Emmanuel, tried to curb the strength of "the Turk". Arrogance, over-confidence, poor planning, and lack of co-ordination had led the Christian forces into the complete

---

169. See Barthold, op. cit., n. 74, vol. 1, p. 59.

170. Timur betrays his sense of superiority and tolerant forbearance towards Europeans, in this instance, towards the Spanish ambassadors sent by Henry III of Castille, when he compares them to the minutest animals skidding along on the surface of the sea. He grants them an audience for, as he says "les Casses ont aussi leur place dans la mer": see op. cit., n. 80, vol. 4, p. 180, n. (a) and (b). See also Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 3.

disaster of Nicopolis in 1396.[171] Bajazet's victorious troops had then gradually marched to within a few miles from Constantinople so that by 1400 the city faced a total collapse.[172] Emmanuel's two-year itinerary leading him to the various courts of Europe had failed to rally Christian forces to his help.[173] In desperation, Emmanuel was forced to turn to Timur as his only hope of rescue from the threat of the Ottoman rule. In return for his help, Emmanuel promised he would help Timur against the Turks who were encroaching upon Timur's territories.[174]

Timur had reason to be wary of and annoyed by Bajazet. Princes, dispossessed by Bajazet's military initiatives, had fled to Timur for help.[175] Yet, for several reasons, Timur hesitated to engage in a war against Bajazet. Both shared the Moslem faith even though they belonged to different sects. Timur's admiration for Bajazet's military zeal against the Christian infidels of Europe explained the tolerant attitude he had preserved until the time of Emmanuel's plea.[176] Furthermore, Timur did not wish the Moslems to share the European powers' reputation of internecine dissent and conflicts, a reputation for which the Moslems felt utter contempt.[177] Timur took every

---

171. See Le Strange, op. cit., n. 82, p. 1; Telfer, op. cit., n. 86, pp. xv-xvi; Hookham, op. cit., n.70, pp. 2 and 214 ff.

172. Emperor Emmanuel's territory eastward had been eventually reduced to a strip about 50 miles long and under 30 miles wide beyond Constantinople: see Le Strange, op. cit., n. 82, p. 1.

173. See ibid., p. 3.

174. See Clavijo, op. cit., n. 82, p. 135; see also Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 2.

175. See Clavijo, op. cit., n. 82, p. 131; Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, pp. 257 and 394; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 217.

176. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, pp. 396, 403 and 419. For Bajazet's zeal for the Moslem faith, see Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, pp. 181-182. See also Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 218.

177. Timur appeals to the fact that he and Bajazet are both of the same people: see Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 191. See also Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 243.

means possible to avoid an encounter with Bajazet. However, Bajazet failed to understand the gravity of the situation,[178] treated Timur's envoys most arrogantly, and refused to listen to advice of any sort. Bajazet, hitherto called "the invincible",[179] now earned for himself the reputation of being "the Turk with no sense".[180] His obstinacy was to be instrumental in changing the course of history for several countries and in sealing his own tragic fate. Timur finally had to resign himself to the inevitable and prepare for an eventual encounter with Bajazet's troops.

Being a shrewd military strategist, Timur knew that he must first master Egypt, the greatest of the Moslem powers. Egypt controlled the trade and pilgrim routes to Mecca and Medina, and the Moslem shrines in Jerusalem.[181] Timur destroyed Aleppo and turned against Damascus, once the capital of Islam now replaced by Baghdad. Damascus had the finest mosque in Islam with its splendid dome and minarets.[182] In an attempt to avert a military engagement,[183] Timur proposed conditions for peace.[184] The conditions were refused and the city was besieged. The walls were undermined and broken

---

178. See Clavijo, op. cit., n. 82, p. 132.

179. Clavijo describes Bajazet as "one of the greatest and most potent sovereigns that the world has seen": see op. cit., n. 82, p. 24.

180. Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 220. Pétis explains the following in connection with Bajazet's folly:

> "Mahomet a dit que lorsque Dieu a résolu de détruire quelqu'un, il lui bouche l'esprit, et lui ôte le jugement; qu'il lui cache les voyes qu'il doit suivre pour se garantir de la fatalité qui lui est destinée, et qu'il permet qu'il fasse des actions imprudentes, qui deviennent les causes de sa ruine; en sorte que la volonté de Dieu ne manque pas de s'accomplir":

op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, p. 273.

181. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 222.

182. See ibid., pp. 227 ff. See also above, pp. 68-69.

183. See ibid., p. 230. Timur first tried to lay the blame on the Damascenes for the war.

184. See ibid. These conditions, typical of Timur, were to deliver their governor, to mention Timur in their Friday prayers and to have money struck in his name.

down; all the treasure was taken in the course of a three-day pillage and tortures of all kinds were inflicted upon the Damascenes. The city and its military garrison were lost to the power of Timur. Baghdad suffered a similar fate; large numbers of citizens were forced to retreat into the Tigris river and were drowned.[185] Timur succeeded in capturing the treasure hidden in the river by deflecting the course of its stream.[186]

Once these cities and others had been dealt with, Timur renewed his attempts to make peace with Bajazet. Timur was having difficulties with his emirs. These were not eager to face the well-equipped Bajazet [187] whose reputation on the battlefield was well established.[188] Besides, the stars were unfavourable.[189] Timur calmed the fears of his troops by explaining to them that he was the instrument selected by God to punish tyrants.[190] Bajazet had married a Christian Serbian princess, Lesbina, and had allowed her to keep her faith. Thus, Bajazet had given refuge to the enemies of Allah,[191] a most serious offence by Moslem standards. Events rapidly worked up to a climax. According to astrologers, the stars later became favourable to Timur's initiatives.[192] Bajazet's last message was so crude and so

---

185. See Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, pp. 180-181; Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, p. 198.

186. See Schiltberger, op. cit., n. 86, pp. 24 and 130, n. 1. In Hayton this detail has already been romanticized. Timur is supposed to have found a ship in the bottom of the Euphrates in which were hidden all the treasures of the former Persian kings: see op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxiii, col. b - fol. lxiii v, col. a.

187. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, pp. 280, and 403-404; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 246.

188. Clavijo, op. cit., n. 82, p. 24; Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, p. 190, n. 1. See also above, p. 74, n. 179.

189. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, p. 404.

190. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 246.

191. See ibid.

192. In Pétis the prediction is formulated as follows:

> "Il parait par les Prédictions marquées dans les Ephemerides de la présente année, que l'ascendant de cet Etat est dans le plus haut degré de force, et que celui des Ennemis est dans le plus

cont'd./

provocative by Moslem standards[193] that Timur reviewed his troops and planned his march to Ankara, Bajazet's military base. On the way, Timur's horrible cruelty towards the Christians earned for himself the reputation of being "the dragon whose breath was mortal".[194]

Once more Timur's military strategy won the day. He eluded Bajazet and tricked him into marching his troops to the point of exhaustion in a rapid and, ultimately, futile eight-day chase after his own army. By the time Bajazet faced Timur, his army was exhausted and was out of supplies of food and water. Bajazet had to face a losing battle from the start.[195] After Timur had spent all night in prayer,[196] the armies met. The struggle was long and arduous with heavy losses on both sides. Some of Bajazet's emirs and his own son took flight; some of the troops newly recruited from territories he had taken from the Scythian went back to Timur; the Christian Serbian wing he had formerly taken withdrew.[197] In spite of these serious setbacks, Bajazet put up a heroic fight but was finally taken prisoner and brought to Timur who is said to have treated him with all the respect and

---

Footnote No. 192 cont'd./

> haut degré de faiblesse, il paraîtra une Comete dans Aries, et il viendra une Armée du côté d'Orient, qui fera la conquête entière de la Natolie, dont le Prince sera pris prisonnier":

op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, p. 405. See also Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 246.

193. See Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 185; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 247. The insult was directed to Timur's wives and expressed scorn for the Moslem law against divorce. It was somewhat to the effect that Bajazet would not yield to Timur's conditions for a peaceful settlement until Timur had thrice repudiated his wives.

194. Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 220.

195. See Clavijo, op. cit., n. 82, p. 136; Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 4, ch. 46, 47, 48; Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, pp. 191 ff.; Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, pp. 207 ff.; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 247 ff.

196. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 4, p. 8; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 251.

197. According to Arabian authors, Bajazet was defeated because of the defection of Tatar troops in his army and not, as Persian and Turkish historians have imagined, by the defection of Turkish princes of Asia Minor: see Telfer, op. cit., n. 86, p. 116, n. 65. See also Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 195; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 252.

courtesy due to royalty.[198] Bajazet, already of poor health, was to die in captivity a few months later in 1403.[199] Thus, in 1402, the greatest enemy of the Christian forces of the West was destroyed not by the Christians themselves but by an infidel from distant Central Asia.[200]

Unfortunately, the Christians of Constantinople did not keep the promises they had made to Timur with regard to the Turks.[201] The sudden

---

198. Clavijo makes no mention of Timur treating the captive Bajazet in any humiliating manner; neither does Schiltberger. Pétis discredits the legends pertaining to Timur's bad treatment of Bajazet after his defeat. In the foreword to his book, he affirms that on the contrary, "Timur-Bec traita toujours Bajazet comme son égal, et qu'il lui fit rendre tous les honneurs qui sont dûs aux plus grands Rois": see op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. xvii, n. (a). Sharaf al-din notes that Timur was very moved at the sight of Bajazet in chains and treated him with gentleness. Bajazet is said to have realized that the mistake was all his and that, subsequently, he submitted to his captor. Meanwhile, Timur had his troops search for Bajazet's two sons and a royal pavilion erected for Bajazet. Timur's kindness towards Bajazet is compared to that of Mahomet towards Mecca and that of Joseph towards his brothers: see op. cit., n. 80, vol. 4, pp. 16-19. Sharaf al-din goes on to say that Timur's grandson married Bajazet's eldest daughter, that Timur sent Destina, Bajazet's wife back to her husband after having forced her to become a Moslem. Timur is supposed to have ordered a banquet to which Bajazet was invited to take part in the feast and share the joy of friendship with Timur. Timur is said to have done all he could to cheer Bajazet, going so far as to restore to him the crown and the sceptre of Natolia: see ibid., vol. 4, pp. 31-36, passim. In Vattier, Arabshah says that each of Bajazet's sons tried to save himself the best he could at this time. According to Arabshah, Timur at first treated Bajazet with courtesy, but then laughed at him. Everyday he would convene Bajazet to a feast during which Bajazet was sore afflicted by the treatment meted out to his wives: see op. cit., n. 84, pp. 200 ff. Lamb says that at such banquets, rage would grip Bajazet like a fever and that eventually he died: see op. cit., n. 73, pp. 214-215.

199. Sharaf says that Timur was moved to tears at the news of Bajazet's death. Timur had made plans to restore Bajazet on his throne with greater power and splendour than he had previously enjoyed. Timur is said to have consoled Bajazet's officers with liberal gifts, as well as Bajazet's son Chelebi. Sharaf speaks of a royal funeral for Bajazet: see Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 4, pp. 65-67. Causes of Bajazet's death vary according to authors. Most mention suicide. Bajazet was buried with all honours: see Pétis, ibid., p. 67. See also Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 274.

200. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 253.

201. See Clavijo, op. cit., n. 82, p. 136.

disappearance of their invincible foe Bajazet confused these Christians to the extent that instead of using the opportunity offered them to break down the Ottoman Empire once and for all they came to the Turks' rescue.[202] Rumours of Timur's plans to overrun Europe and Africa and extend his sway unto the gates of Hercules terrified them.[203] Neighbouring countries were horrified by the tales of cruelty which were part of Timur's career. They were panic-stricken at the thought of a Tartar landing on European soil.[204] These conflicting rumours induced the Christians to take sides with their enemies, the Ottoman, against Timur who had temporarily saved them from the oppression of "the Great Turk".[205] Timur retaliated by striking against Smyrna. This Christian stronghold had been a challenge to the Moslems for centuries, ever since the times of the crusades. Its destruction would set the seal of a holy war upon the whole campaign and soothe Timur's uneasiness about having fought against the Moslem Sultan of Egypt and the Moslem Bajazet.[206] Timur levelled the fort to the ground, slaughtered its inhabitants,[207] and proved conclusively that he was the greatest warrior of the Moslem faith.[208]

However, the Christians inhabiting regions remote from the scene of the battle at Ankara reacted differently to Timur's role in the defeat of the Turks. Timur's victory over Bajazet brought streams of letters of congratulations from European princes. Charles VI of France, Henry IV of England, Henry III of Castille, and others united in their round of applause

---

202. See Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, pp. 217 ff.

203. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 260.

204. See ibid.

205. Lamb speaks of the bewilderment of Europeans brought about by the sudden disappearance of the century-old enemy, the Ottoman empire: see op. cit., n. 73, pp. 216-217; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 253 ff.

206. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 3, 254-255 and 270.

207. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 4, pp. 47 ff.; Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, pp. 217-218; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 254-255.

208. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 256.

for Timur's victory.[209] Streams of envoys were sent[210] and the interest in opening transcontinental trade routes was revived.[211] Timur's defeat of "the Great Turk" marked a turning point in the relations between the East and the West, temporarily at least, until the Ottoman princes had time to recover from their defeat.

Nevertheless, Timur's scorn for anything European prevailed. After making sure that no nest of opposition, which might annoy him in the future, remained, he turned his back to these European powers[212] and marched towards the plains of Central Asia bringing the captive Bajazet with him. Other pursuits were beckoning him; he planned a last holy war against the Ming dynasty[213] to free the oppressed Moslems living in their territory. In spite of the small degree of enthusiasm shown by his warlords, Timur forced them to march in sub-zero weather and suffer inhuman living conditions. However, the whole campaign was suddenly interrupted by Timur's illness. Physicians failed to relieve him of his abdominal ailment.[214] He died[215] after repeating many times the profession of faith of the Moslems, that is, "There

---

209. Clavijo was present at the court of Timur at this time and was a witness to Bajazet's fate: see op. cit., n. 82, p. 25. Sharaf mentions the presence of European ambassadors at Timur's court after the defeat of Bajazet: see Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 4, p. 180. See also Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, pp. 218-219; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 2-3 and 259-260.

210. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 2-3.

211. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 2 and 260.

212. See Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, p. 219; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 3.

213. See Schiltberger, op. cit., n. 86, pp. 28-29; Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 4, ch. 26, 27; Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, pp. 240 ff; Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, pp. 225 ff.; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, pp. 296 ff. Early in his career, Timur had already determined to march against China: see Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, p. 16.

214. Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 301. Sharaf says that Timur ran a high fever: see Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 4, p. 221. See also Schiltberger, op. cit., n. 86, p. 29.

215. Schiltberger says that Timur's death was hastened by proofs of disloyalty found within his circle. One of his vassals had run away with a sizeable tribute and his young eighth wife had been unfaithful to him. The vassal had not been found and he had had to have his wife beheaded. See op. cit., n. 86, p. 29.

is no God but God".[216] Rivalry and strife among his descendants followed and quickly disintegrated the empire he had entrusted to them. Bajazet's descendants soon recaptured the lost territories while Timur's dynasty was to live on in India for another hundred years.[217]

The image of Timur which emerges from the historical accounts is one of awe and majesty marred by cruelty and destruction. From an obscure and humble background, Timur gradually works his way up to the highest position of leadership.[218] The rise is neither smooth nor easy. Robberies and pillages, the opportune and occasional crime, the risks and hazards of battles, the exploitation of situations of unrest brought about by rivalries: all of these are the steps by which Timur gradually climbs to power and wins the loyalty of the warlords and a military following for himself.[219] In spite of a permanent disability incurred during his skirmishes as a youth,[220] his powerful physique dominates the scene, and contributes to create the formidable appearance of Timur,[221] especially of the wrathful Timur.[222]

The image of Timur the warrior is that of a leader ever on the alert to establish and preserve the absolute command of his huge armies. Because he can exercise a precise and complete control over his troops, Timur can use with maximum efficiency his uncanny sense of timing and his military strategy, both of which account for his extraordinary succession of victories.[223]

---

216. Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 4, p. 228 n. ; Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 303.

217. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 7.

218. See above, pp. 57 ff.

219. See above, pp. 58 and 60; see also p. 58, n. 103.

220. See above, p. 58 and n. 102.

221. See above, p. 67.

222. See above, p. 67 n. 144.

223. See above, p. 72 ff.

There is a show of grandeur in all that he does even in the scale and magnitude of his destruction and in his deeds of unflinching cruelty.[224] Nevertheless, Timur's historians are not oblivious to the human side of their leader. Hesitations, uncertainties, and distress arising from decisions to be made in a context of conflicting loyalties have their part to play especially in Timur's encounter with Bajazet.[225] His generals can cause difficulties; they do not always wholeheartedly support Timur's decisions about engaging battles. With all the advantages of numbers, supplies, geographical setting, and the good condition of his armies in his favour, Timur has to put up a stiff fight before he manages to defeat and capture Bajazet. Timur does not climb the path to military rule and political power without incurring upon himself anxieties, trials, and difficulties.

However, it is impossible to explain fully Timur the man or Timur the warrior without giving due emphasis to the religious dimensions of the hero. Timur's career, whether blessed by the admiring historians like Sharaf al-din or cursed by Arabshah, Timur's prisoner-historian, remains humanly inexplicable.[226] Commentators borrow imagery from Scripture or from nature to explain Timur's mission or power. According to a favourite Moslem image, probably borrowed from the Book of Revelation, Timur is marked on the forehead with the signs of a special fate.[227] Arabshah measures the extent of Timur's territories on that of the course of the sun travelling from East to West.[228] Hookham, mindful of the significance of Timur's victory over Bajazet, echoes the attitude of the Christians of Europe towards Timur when she interprets Timur's appearance as the star of hope for Christianity blazing once more in the Orient,[229] an image which

---

224. See above, p. 68 and p.69 n. 156.
225. See above pp. 73 ff. See also p. 73, n. 177.
226. See above, p. 62 n. 121 and n. 123. See also pp. 83-84.
227. See Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, pp. 23 and 120.
228. See Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, Portrait ..., p. 74.
229. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 2.

recalls the role of the saviour Christ. All these attempt to explain in words what in fact seemed beyond explanation.

As may be expected in a career which apparently can best be understood in religious terms, the prophetic dimension plays an important part. Historical accounts point out how the appearance of Timur had been foretold many generations before by one of his ancestors.[230] Timur's memoirs record that his father had had a prophetic dream about one of his sons who would purify the earth from the defilement of idolatry and spread the true religion over the face of the globe.[231] Timur's spiritual advisors had foreseen the greatness of Timur's career. In his memoirs, Timur tells of omens, repeatedly coming to him in dreams, which either predict successes to come or the future significance of past events. Whether these dreams were real or fictive, they created some spiritual kinship between him and Mahomet.[232] For divine guidance, Timur turned to "sayyids" he visited[233] or to verses chosen at random from the Koran, according to a current practice of the Moslems.[234] Timur's historians note that frequently Timur re-

---

230. Timur's coming had been prophesied by one of his ancestors. According to this ancestor, Timur was to be the eighth star among his descendants, and would be of such splendour that it would light the four quarters of the world with the brightness of its virtues and its victories: see Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, Foreword, fol. e iii v - eiiii. See p. 56 and n. 92; p. 57, n. 93; p. 75, n. 192, and below, n. 231.

231. Timur's father had a dream before the birth of his son in which he saw a person of a luminous countenance holding a naked scimitar which when used caused numerous sparks to illuminate the whole earth. This dream was interpreted in the following manner: one of his sons would be "a world-subduing sword", who would "purify the earth from the defilement of idolatry, and spread the true religion over the face of the globe", and would generally benefit mankind: see Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, p. 20.

232. According to his memoirs, Timur often saw Mahomet in his dreams: see Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, pp. 11, 14, 17 and 19.

233. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, pp. 315-318; Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, pp. 8-9; Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, pp. 14, 18 and 30; Hookham op. cit., n. 70, pp. 104-105.

234. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, pp. 91-92; Stewart, op. cit., n. 76, pp. 77 and 135.

minded his followers that all his initiatives were undertaken under the express commandment of God.[235] As may be expected, Timur's career is easily paralleled with those of Biblical or Islamic prophets. Thus Timur's rise to the summit of power is compared to that of Joseph.[236] Timur spreads his armies everywhere like the families of Israel.[237] Like Mahomet, Timur poses as a prophet[238] and he hopes to spread the terror of his name over all the world.[239] To insult Timur is tantamount to insulting Mahomet himself and is worthy of the most drastic punishment.[240] This concern for spiritual advice, omens, and prophecy would seem to indicate Timur's basic need to feel that he had the blessing of Allah on his enterprises. Hence his practice of praying before and after each major battle. Timur needs the inner assurance necessary to support his dedication to the Moslem cause and the superhuman energy needed to carry out his military campaigns. This religious context promotes his military engagements to the dignity of holy wars and forestalls any feelings of guilt which might trouble him. Timur's religious motivation, whether real or used as a political tool, seals the apparently useless massive massacres with divine approval and dispels any blame he might incur from his enemies.

Timur's career transcends human dimensions. His historians can adequately describe his career only in terms of the workings of Providence in human affairs.[241] Timur's successes are for him the tokens of love of a

---

235. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 78.

236. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 45; vol. 4, p. 19.

237. The following words were addressed to Timur: "Vos armées sont repandués par tout, comme les familles des enfans d'Israel": Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 160.

238. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, pp. 70 and 305.

239. See ibid., vol. 3, p. 286.

240. See Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, Portrait ..., p. 24.

241. See above p. 62, n. 123. See also Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 350.

God[242] who assigns crowns as he pleases to whomever he wishes.[243] From this conviction, it is easy for Timur to conclude that he is in a close and intimate relationship with the Divine and to act accordingly. He considers himself to be a chosen "servant of God", the executor of his Divine will,[244] the instrument of his designs.[245] Sharaf al-din interprets the mission of Timur to be that of a Scourge and considers Timur's victories to be expressions of that mission rather than effects of his human skills as a military leader.[246] The same historian affirms that God was using Timur, his liberalities as well as his wraths, as means of scourging humanity.[247] Even Timur's ambitions of conquering Asia would be God-inspired for the purpose of destroying its tyrants and of establishing peace and order in

---

242. Timur is reported to have explained the following to his soldiers: "La victoire était un don que Dieu faisait libéralement aux Princes qu'Il aimait: que le grand nombre de soldats, ni le grand embarras d'equipages, n'avaient rien de commun avec la victoire, ...": Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, p. 281.

243. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, fol. e i;pp. 140. See above, p. 66, n. 141.

244. See Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 422.

245. See Hookham, op. cit., n. 70, p. 246. See also Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. 64; vol. 2, p. 114.

246. The divine mission of a scourge is associated with Timur "dont les avantages étaient considérés plustôt comme un fléau de Dieu que comme un effet de la puissance humaine": Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 3, p. 302; vol. 4, p. 198.

247. Sharaf al-din justifies Timur's activities in these words: "Dieu, qui voulut purger le monde, se servit de la Médecine, tantôt douce et tantôt amère, des bienfaits et de la colère de l'incomparable Timur, et pour cet effet il lui inspira l'ambition de la conquête de toute l'Asie, dont il chassa les Tyrans, et qu'il orna ensuite de ses bienfaits: il fit régner la paix et la sureté dans cette partie du monde jusqu'à un tel point, qu'un homme seul aurait pû porter un Bassin d'argent plein d'or sur sa tête depuis l'Orient de l'Asie jusques à l'Occident" mais non sans quantité de meurtres, pillages, etc. auparavant "qui sont les soeurs des Victoires": Pétis, op. cit., n. 80, vol. 4, p. 198.

their stead.[248] Sharaf al-din dwells little on Timur's massacres, cruelties, murders, and pillages; they are incidental effects of the mission of a scourge.[249] There is even an apocalyptic dimension attached to Timur's armies. They are compared to the general assembly of the Resurrection foretold in the Book of Revelation.[250]

The resentful Arabshah recognizes that there are some superhuman aspects to Timur's career and admits that he is guided and helped by heaven.[251] Timur seems to be so governed by forces other than just his human drives that Arabshah reads a kind of fatality in Timur's successes.[252] Nevertheless, in the eyes of Arabshah, for all his greatness, Timur is no more than an Amalekite,[253] another Nabuchadnezzar[254] disporting bravadoes of the Haman and Pharaoh type.[255] Timur's soldiers are truly devils, hosts of Satan spreading ruin and destruction or the equivalents of Satan and his satellites.[256] Arabshah even equates Timur with the Antichrist of Revelation who is to spread destruction everywhere.[257]

Thus prophetic elements, the theme of fatality, the mission of a Scourge, divine instrumentality and intimate knowledge of the divine: all of these are traits which make up the image of the historical Timur as friend and foe described him. Dualism and paradox are the essence of Timur,

---

248. See above, p. 82, n. 231; p. 84, n. 247.

249. See above, p. 84, n. 247.

250. Timur's armies were "vne image des terreurs de la Resurrection": Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 186. See ibid., p.153.This comparison occurs quite frequently throughout this history of Timur.

251. Arabshah, Timur's arch-enemy, estimates Timur's career in the following words: "La Providence estoit de sa partie, la volonté de Dieu tout puissant le poussoit, les decrets de la souueraine sageese, qui dispose des hommes et des villes, comme il luy plaist, luy preparoient la voye": see Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 127.

252. See above, n. 251.

253. See Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, Portrait ..., p. 1.

254. See ibid., p. 24.

255. See, Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 182.

256. See Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 153; ibid., Portrait..., pp. 12 and 28; Clavijo, op. cit., n. 82, p. 189; Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, p. 22, n. 1 and p. 282.

257. See Vattier, op. cit., n. 84, p. 127.

the man and warrior, as they are of Timur, the divine agent. Magnificence and cruelty, liberality and thieving, superhuman achievements and triviality: all these contradictory aspects co-exist in Timur the man; the aura of the divine and the perversity of Satan are part of the spiritual image of Timur. There remains to see how these religious traits of Timur survive in the Tamerlane figure as it appears in the popular accounts of the sixteenth century and how the religious elements of both of these aspects of the Scythian hero become a part of Marlowe's play.

The historical accounts examined above show that the spiritual dimension of the hero is an important factor to keep in mind in the study of Timur, the man and warrior. One wonders whether this spiritual dimension plays as important a role in the understanding of the hero as he appeared in the accounts and chronicles available in Marlowe's days. For, by the time Marlowe wrote his play, Timur's story had lost much of its historical character. The emotional responses of Western Europeans to the defeat of Bajazet and the liberation of Constantinople had coloured the name and career of Timur and transformed his story into the Tamerlane-myth, fruit of the forces of imagination of the European chroniclers. By discarding some data and introducing some legendary material, the chroniclers had created a new image of the hero. This image reflected the significance they attached to Timur's interference in European affairs and became compatible with the aspirations and beliefs of the Christian writers. What religious elements had the Christian chroniclers incorporated into the story of Tamburlaine and what was their significance?

Marlowe read about Turkish affairs and Tamerlane probably at Canterbury or at Cambridge or at both places. The one author whose work indicates the kind of background materials available in the area of Canterbury in Marlowe's days is Richard Knolles. The fact that his work, The Generall Historie of the Turkes. ... (London, 1603),[258] was published

---

258. Richard Knolles, The Generall Historie of the Turkes...(London. 1603).

almost twenty years after the appearance of the play does not necessarily rule out the possibility that Knolles may have been instrumental in providing Marlowe with the necessary materials for his drama or may have contributed directly to Marlowe's work. Hugh G. Dick[259] offers several arguments to support this view. First of all, he detects significant parallels between Marlowe's play and certain passages of Jean Bodin's Six Livres de la republique (1576), a work translated and published by Knolles under the title The Six Bookes of a Commonweal (1606). Although the translation appeared almost twenty years after Tamburlaine, Marlowe may possibly have had access to Knolles's French version of Bodin. However, this possibility loses some of its importance if one remembers that Marlowe could have read this work also at Cambridge.[260] However, Dick attempts to prove that Knolles, the Manwood family, and Marlowe could have been well acquainted with each other and that, consequently, each may have been instrumental to further the work of the other two.

Knolles probably knew Sir Roger Manwood (1525-1592), Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer. Besides having a residence in London, Sir Roger also owned a family seat on the outskirts of his native Canterbury and another home in Sandwich,[261] some twelve miles from Canterbury. Moreover, for almost thirty-five years, that is, between 1572 and 1606, Knolles was Master of the free grammar school at Sandwich by appointment of its founder Sir Roger. However, Knolles appears to have had a closer relationship with Sir Peter Manwood, son of Sir Roger. Sir Peter was known as "a louer and great fauourer of learning".[262] In his "Indvction to the Christian Reader", Knolles expresses gratitude to Sir Peter for having made himself the custodian of his manuscript[263] while it rested "many years" in his safe

---

259. Hugh G. Dick, "Tamburlaine Sources Once More", SP 46 (1949), pp.154-166.

260. For evidence of the interest Cambridge scholars had in Bodin, see below, p. 93-94.

261. See Dick, op. cit., n. 259, pp. 156 ff., passim.

262 Knolles, op. cit., n. 258, Indvction to the Christian Reader (unpaginated).

263. See ibid.

keeping,[264] as the "long and painefull trauell"[265] was laid aside and resumed many times[266] before it was completed. Sir Peter appears to have frequently urged Knolles to finish his work on the history of the Turks.[267] Sir Peter's interest and constant stimulation possibly deserve much of the credit for Knolles's successful completion of his Historie.[268] Besides pointing to a close acquaintance between Sir Peter and himself, Knolles's remarks suggest that his Historie was a laborious enterprise which spanned many years.

Knolles's description of the method he followed attests to the amount of labour which went into the writing of his book. He outlines his method of research in his preface and explains that because he had to make his way through masses of materials from many sources, he had to develop a technique of writing whereby he built up sections by adding layer upon layer of information as additional materials were made available to him. He explains that he started by using all the eye-witness accounts he could find. He then expanded on this score by adding material he gathered from historians who had had access to primary sources. Finally, he incorporated information gathered from reliable secondary sources and made his work up-to-date by drawing upon recent Continental publications.[269] Knolles lists over thirty authors he used in writing his Historie: others are named throughout the text.[270] The question which immediately arises is where did Knolles get

---

264. See ibid.

265. Ibid.

266. See ibid.

267. Knolles speaks of Sir Peter Manwood as "the onely furtherer, stay, and helpe of these my labours": see ibid.

268. See ibid.

269. For a summary of Knolles's methods of research and writing, see Dick, op. cit., n. 259, pp. 162-163.

270. Knolles's list of authors he used includes the following names: Abrahamus Ortelius, Achillis Traducci, Aeneas Sylvius, Alcoranum Turcicum, Antonius Sabellicus, Antonius Bonfinius, Antonius Pigafetta,

cont'd./

his materials if he did not own the books himself? The answer appears to be from the Manwood family "who possessed a library of contemporary books and manuscripts".[271] It may be supposed that if Sir Peter assumed the custody of Knolles's manuscript on several occasions, his interest might have extended to making his own library accessible to Knolles. Thus, Knolles probably obtained much of the material he used from Sir Peter himself.

A second question which Dick raises concerns the number of years Knolles took to write his book. According to Dick, the twelve years allotted by Sir Sidney Lee[272] appear insufficient. Knolles's method of research and the masses of material he had to cope with suggest that he would have required more than that period of time to write his Historie. This would suppose that large parts of the Historie existed long before 1591, the year when Knolles would have begun writing had he taken only the twelve allotted years. Could the sections of interest to Marlowe have been among these parts? Knolles wrote his book in two sections. The first, rather short, about 128 pages in length, is an account of the general history of the Turks before the rise of the Ottoman rule. The second, over one thousand folio pages in length, describes "The Liues of the Othoman Kings and Emperours". The stories of Tamerlane and Mahomet II, and the

---

Footnote No. 270 cont'd./

Antonius Guarnerius, Augerius Busbequius, Bernard de Girard, Blondus Foroliviensis, Caelius Secundus Curio, David Chytraeus, Franciscus Sansovinus, Henricus Pantaleon, Iacobus Fontanus, Ioannes Leunclavius, Laonicus Chalcondylas, Lazarus Soranzi, Leonardus Chiensis, Leonardus Goretius, Marinus Barletius, Martinus Chromerus, Nicephorus Gregoras, Nicetas Choniates, Nicolaus Honigerus, Nicolaus Reusnerus, Paulus Iovius, Phillippus Lonicerus, Petrus Bizarus, Sebastianus Monsterus, Thomas Minadoi, Theodorus Spanduginus, Knolles lists the following German sources: Andreae Strigelii, Theodori Meureri, Iacobi Franci. See op. cit., n. 258, "Indvction to the Christian Reader" (unpaginated). Other authors are mentioned throughout the text.

271. Quoted from Bakeless, op. cit., n. 10, vol. 1, p. 92 in Dick, op. cit., n. 259, p. 158.

272. See DNB, art. "Knolles".

Varna incident, three topics of interest to Marlowe, occur early in the second part which, Dick believes,[273] was written before the first. This would indicate that whether these three topics were written by Knolles before or after the first section of the Historie, the parts which probably interested Marlowe already existed in manuscript long before he wrote his play.

However, another problem emerges about Marlowe's use of Knolles's material on Tamerlane. Knolles's lengthy account of Tamerlane's career appears in the chapter devoted to Bajazet[274] and is completed in the chapter on Mahomet, the successor to Bajazet.[275] Much of Knolles's material used in the story of Tamerlane is derived from Jean du Bec's account published in 1595,[276] at least eight years after the first appearance of the play. Nevertheless, Marlowe's Tamburlaine appears to be more kindred in spirit with Knolles's Tamerlane than it is with the Tamerlane of the chroniclers. In both works, the hero is a leader full of vitality and boundless energy, and mindful of his religious loyalties. How is one to explain these similarities? Moreover, Knolles's manner of treating the Varna incident[277] and of describing some traits of Mahomet II[278] also seem to have strongly influenced Marlowe. Or, is one to suppose that the influence was exercised in the other direction, that is, by Marlowe on Knolles? One answer might be that Marlowe had access to and used Knolles's manuscript. Another might be that the apparent kinship which one can detect between the two works might stem from a Kentish mentality common to both and expressed through the use of a Kentish idiom also common to both. Another explanation of this kinship might be that Knolles revised his account with Marlowe's text still fresh in his mind. Finally, it is possible that both shared the same

---

273. See Dick, op. cit., n. 259, p. 161 and n. 24.
274. See Knolles, op. cit., n. 258, pp. 210-228.
275. See ibid., pp. 234-239.
276. Jean du Bec, Histoire dv Grand Empereyr Tamerlanes... (Rouen, 1595)
277. See App. B.
278. See App. A.

fund of source materials either through informal discussions or through access to the same pool of information. Marlowe may have become acquainted with the same background material either through the intermediation of Knolles or directly from Sir Peter. Is there any possibility that Marlowe may have used the Manwood library? Or, did Knolles and Marlowe share a popular lore about the hero Tamerlane?

Marlowe's name is associated with the Manwoods on several occasions. Sir Roger Manwood was at one time believed to have been Marlowe's patron.[279] He was on the bench when Marlowe and Thomas Watson were charged with the murder of William Bradley in the Hog Lane fight in 1589.[280] Sir Roger Manwood's granddaughter Elizabeth was married to the son of Sir Thomas Walsingham, younger cousin to Sir Francis Walsingham,[281] Secretary of State and head of the spying network of which Marlowe was probably an agent. Sir Thomas was noted for his interest in learning and later became a patron and friend of Marlowe.[282] Marlowe probably knew the Walsinghams already in 1586 through his connections with the state's spying network. Finally, Marlowe wrote a laudatory epitaph in Latin upon Sir Roger after his death in 1592.[283] These details could suggest that Marlowe had more than a passing acquaintance with the Manwoods, that he possibly owed more than one debt of gratitude to Sir Roger when he wrote his epitaph and that one of these debts may have been the liberal use of the Manwood library. As a conclusion to the above remarks about the relationships of the Manwoods, Knolles, and Marlowe, one may suppose that Marlowe and Knolles possibly helped each other in their writing pursuits as a result of the connections of each with the Manwood family.

---

279. See Wraight and Stern, op. cit., n. 11, pp. 5 and 35.

280. See Boas, op. cit., n. 3, p. 105.

281. See Wraight and Stern, op. cit., n. 11, p. 35.

282. See ibid.

283. See Bowers, ed. cit., n. 1, vol. 2, pp. 534-535 and 540. See also Dick, op. cit., n. 259, pp. 157-158.

However, Marlowe's use of the Manwood library for the writing of his play raises problems about his presence in Canterbury. From December 1580 until July 1587, Marlowe was registered as a student at Cambridge. For most of this period, the college account books[284] as well as the Buttery book of Corpus Christi College indicate quite accurately the proportion of time of Marlowe's attendance in each term.[285] Marlowe was absent on several different occasions and sometimes for periods of several weeks. In the case of one of these absenteeisms, records reveal the whereabouts of Marlowe. The college accounts are missing for the academic year of 1585-1586, but the Buttery book shows that Marlowe did not make any purchases for a period of two weeks during the Michaelmas term of that year, a fact which suggests that he was absent from College at this time.[286] A will in the Kent Record Office in Maidstone reveals that during the Michaelmas term of that year, in fact, in the course of November 1585, Marlowe was in Canterbury. He is known to have read officially Mistress Katherine Benchkin's will. The will bears the signatures of four witnesses, those of John Morley, Marlowe's father, of Thomas Arthur, probably an uncle on his mother's side, of John Moore, Marlowe's brother-in-law, and of Christopher Morley himself, the only extant signature of the dramatist.[287] Are we to suppose that this was the only instance when Marlowe spent his days away from Cambridge in his home town of Canterbury? Thus, on this occasion, as probably on others as well, Marlowe could have read in Canterbury or thereabouts the background material needed for his play.

---

284. The accounts of Corpus Christi College are missing for the academic year 1585-1586: see Boas, op. cit., n. 3, p. 13.

285. See ibid., pp. 12-15.

286. See ibid., p. 14.

287. See Wraight and Stern, op. cit., n. 11, pp. 228-229.

Another area worthy of investigation which normally should shed light on Marlowe's resource materials would be the catalogues of the Cathedral Library in Canterbury. Unfortunately, Marlowe lived in the period between the dissolution of the monasteries, when the contents of the monastic libraries were indiscriminately dispersed, and the time when individuals dedicated to learning began to reorganize these same libraries and record their acquisitions. These records or catalogues reappear well on in the seventeenth century. Montague Rhodes James[288] finds that it is difficult to trace the whereabouts of the books which had belonged to two of the largest libraries in England, those of the Christchurch Cathedral Library of Canterbury and of St. Augustine's Abbey. Some eventually found their way to Christchurch Library in Oxford but many more went to the University Library in Cambridge. The itinerary of some of these books is most unexpected and difficult to follow. John Twine, or Twyne, a schoolmaster and mayor of Canterbury, had a considerable number of these manuscripts which were passed through him to his grandson Brian Twyne and to John Dee and thence to Cambridge. The conclusion of scholars who have studied this question is that there were many books about but exactly where they were is difficult to know.

Should Marlowe not have read about the Turks and Tamerlane at Canterbury, in all likelihood he could have done so at Cambridge. Turkish affairs were a matter of interest to Cambridge scholars. In a letter addressed to Edmund Spenser in 1579, the year before Marlowe's entrance in Cambridge, Gabriel Harvey has this to say:

> You can not stepp into a scholars studye but (ten to on) you shall litely [sic] finde open ether Bodin de Republica or Le Royes Exposition vppon Aristotles Politiques or sum other like Frenche or Italian politique Discourses. And I warrant you sum good fellowes

288. Montague Rhodes James, The Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover (Cambridge, 1903), pp. lxxx ff.

> amongst us begin nowe to be prettely well acquayntid with a certayne parlous byoke callid, as I remember me, Il Principe di Niccolo Machiavelli, and I can peradventure name you an odd crewe or tooe that are as cuninge in his ... Historia Fiorentina, and in his Dialogues della Arte della Guerra tooe, and in certayne gallant Turkishe Discourses tooe,...[289]

In another letter of April 1580, Harvey speaks of "Turkishe affaires familiarly knowen".[290] These letters indicate some of the interests of the students in Marlowe's time and betray the general eagerness to learn on the part of these scholars.

Again, connections between Canterbury and Cambridge, one of these being the contributions of Matthew Parker, archbishop of Canterbury, to the libraries of Cambridge, should provide some information on Marlowe's intellectual training and on his reading interests. However, R. I. Page,[291] who, as librarian of the Corpus Christi College Library, is often confronted by scholars who wish to trace Marlowe's intellectual pursuits via the Parker collection, can only advise them to look elsewhere. From the evidence available, he argues that, unless more information can be found to prove the contrary, it is most unlikely that the Parker collection reached Corpus Christi College before 1593, and that, consequently, Marlowe could not have used these books. The Corpus Christi College Library does not seem to provide answers of any greater accuracy. Again, the comment is that there were many books around, as the letters of Gabriel Harvey of Pembroke College in Cambridge show,[292] but exactly where these books were obtainable is difficult to ascertain.

---

289. Alexander Grosart, ed., The Works of Gabriel Harvey (London, 1884), vol. 1, pp. 137-138.

290. Ibid., p. 70.

291. R. I. Page, "Christopher Marlowe and the Library of Matthew Parker", NQ 24 (1977), pp. 510-514.

292. See above, p. 93-94.

Una M. Ellis-Fermor's analysis of the sources of Marlowe's Tamburlaine still remains the most thorough study in this field.[293] She classifies the material on Tamerlane which was available by the end of the sixteenth century into four categories: accounts drawn from Turkish material,[294] the Byzantine accounts on Timur, which she considers relatively reliable,[295] the Latin memoirs of travellers,[296] and the rest of the materials usually written first in Italian, Spanish, or Latin, and subsequently translated into English and French, all of which with their long train of derived accounts existed in large numbers.[297] She observes that

---

293. See Ellis-Fermor, ed. cit., n. 4, pp. 17-61.

294. According to Ellis-Fermor, the only eastern sources of information about Timur which might have reached Europe before 1600 were the following: Joannes Leunclavius, Annales Sultanorum Othomanidarum a turcis sua lingua scripta.... translated from Turkish into Latin (1588); Hayton, see op. cit., n. 91. See Ellis-Fermor, op. cit., n. 4, pp. 17, 306 and 308. For Marlowe's possible use of Hayton's account, see ibid., p. 27 and n. 2.

295. Ellis-Fermor lists Ducas, Phrantzes, and Chalcondylas but, she notes, the works of those authors seem not to have been used by those who transmitted the story from East to West by 1588: see op. cit., n. 4, p. 17.

296. Among the Latin memoirs of travellers, she lists the following: Carpini, Libellus historicus Joannis de Plano Carpinii, qui missus est Legatus ad Tartaros anno domini 1246: Rubruquis, Itinerarium (1253); Clavijo, see op. cit., n. 82. Ellis-Fermor points out that these seem to have been disregarded in the transmission of Timur's story from the East to the West: see op. cit., n. 4, pp. 17-18, 305 and 306.

297. Ellis-Fermor divides the European accounts into two categories, those of early sixteenth century and those of the second half of the same century. These accounts are found in many universal histories, geographies, or collections of tales. All tend to reproduce each other keeping to a core of similar facts and fiction. Some of the early works she lists are the following: Palmieri, Eusebii Cesariensis Episcopi Chronicon... (1475); Platina, Excellentissimi historici Platine in vitas sumorum pontificum ad Sixtum iiii (1479); Fregoso, Baptiste Fulgosi de dictis factisque memorabilis... (1518); Cambinus, Libro d'Andrea Cambini Fiorentino della origine de Turchi (1529), translated by John Shute under the title Two very notable Commentaries the one of the original of the Turkes b. Andrewe Cambine ... translated oute of Italian into English by John Shute (London, 1562); Richer. De Rebus Turcarum /t.p. 1540. col. 1543/: Pius II (or Aeneas Sylvius). Pius II. Pon. Max. Asiae fines Hist. rer. ubia. gest. enarrantis (Venice. 1503); Cuspinian. De Turcorum Origine Ioannis Cuspiniano autore (Antwerp, 1541); Giovio, Commentarii delle cose de Turchi. ... (1541) which was translated into English by

cont'd./

the further east the origin of these works, the greater the possibility for them to hold a greater degree of accuracy.[298] Several of the authors she lists are also found in Knolles's list of sources[299] as they are found also in Eric Voegelin's analysis of the Tamerlane-myth tradition.[300]

Voegelin analyses the history of the Tamerlane-myth. According to him, Poggio (1380-1459), a Florentine humanist of the fifteenth century, is the first to have manifested interest in Timur. In a letter published among his works in 1538, he points out that two roads open the way to glory: military exploits and literary pursuits. Poggio judges the literary fame to be superior as Timur, whose deeds were performed less than fifty years before, is now almost forgotten. Poggio claims he heard the story of Timur from soldiers who had belonged to the hero's armies, a claim which is questionable as his account of the hero's career is already a series of anecdotes which seem to have their origin in fancy. Poggio, the first one to refer to Timur by the name of "Tambellanus", apparently is at the origin

---

Footnote No. 297 cont'd./

Peter Ashton under the title A shorte treatise upon the Turkes Chronicles, compyled by Paulus Iovius ... Drawn out of the Italyen tong into Latin ... And translated out of Latyne into englysh by Peter Ashton (1546); Muenster, Cosmographia ... (1544); Pedro Mexia, Silva de Varia Lection. Compuesta por el magnifico cavallero Pedro Mexia ... (1542); Petrus Perondinus, Magni Tamerlani Scythiarum Imperatoris Vita (1553). The majority of the later works are typical recensions. Some of these are the following: Sagundinus, De Rebus Turcicis Libri Tres ... partim a Sagundino vetustissimo Autore, partim a Ioanne Ramo descripti (1553); Granucci, La Vita del Tamburlano (1569); Curio, Caelii Augustini Curionis Sarracenicae Historiae, Libri III (1567), translated by Thomas Newton, A Notable History of the Saracens ... Drawen out of Augustine Curio and Sundry other good Authours ... (1575); Philippus Lonicerus, Chronicorum Turcicorum Tomus Primus ... (1556, 1578, 1584); François de Belleforest, Harengues militaires ... Recueillies et faictes Françoyse, par Françoys de Belle-Forest (1573) and Cosmographie Universelle (1575); Petrus Bizarus, Persicarum rerum historia in xii libros descripta ... (1583); Pierre de la Primaudaye, L'Académie ... (1577) and translated into English by T.B. under the title The French Academy ... (1586); etc. See Ellis-Fermor, op. cit., n. 4, pp. 26-34 and 306-308.

298. See Ellis-Fermor, op. cit., n. 4, p. 17.

299. Cf. above, p. 88, n. 270; pp. 95-96 and p. 95, notes 294, 295, 296, 297.

300. Erich Voegelin, "Das Timurbild der Humanisten: Eine Studie zur politischen Mythenbildung", Zeitschrift für Offentliches Recht 17 (1937), pp. 545-582.

of the European humanistic interest in Timur. His purpose in writing about Timur is to prove that heroic deeds did not all belong to antiquity. He deliberately colours his descriptions of Timur, whom he compares to Hannibal, Alexander, and Xerxes, and develops the career of the hero as an example of the workings of Fortune, the expression of the Divine will in human affairs.[301] Piccolomini is largely responsible for developing Poggio's story of Timur along the following themes: Timur's humble origins, the grouping of his first companions, the expansion of his empire into Asia Minor, his victory at Ankara, the fate of Bajazet enclosed in an iron cage and carried from place to place in Asia as a kind of show-piece, the art of Timur's military camps, the discipline of his soldiers, his victorious march from Syria to Egypt where vast deserts forced his armies to retreat, the rise of Tauris, the use of the white, red, and black tents in his sieges, the incident with the Genoese merchant during which Timur already identifies himself as the wrath of God or as a being greater than man, the comparison of Timur with Hannibal, the enrichment of Samarqand, the regrets that Timur had no great historian to record his deeds, and the decadence of his empire after his death. Additional themes like the story of the Turks, the siege of Constantinople by Bajazet, and the impending fate of the city had not Timur intervened, are subsequently incorporated into the accounts of Timur's career.[302] Later ones expand on the military power of Tamerlane, and elaborate on the anecdote in which Tamerlane calls himself the terror of the world, a leader greater than Xerxes and Darius, on the theme of Tamerlane as the wrath of God, on the cruelty and destruction of Damascus, and on the plight of Bajazet in chains, forced to eat under the table like a dog or used as a footstool.[303] Renaissance chroniclers are interested in creating

---

301. See ibid., pp. 546-552 and notes.

302. See ibid., pp. 555-558 and notes.

303. See ibid., p. 559 and note.

an image of Tamerlane as a great conqueror or empire builder.[304] However, Platina (1479) is already aware that the Christians missed a splendid opportunity of recapturing Jerusalem by not pursuing their fight against the Turks in co-operation with Timur and his armies.[305]

Shortened versions preserve the themes of Tamerlane's greatness, of his power and his low birth, of his role in the battle of Ankara and the fate of Bajazet, of the destruction of Damascus, of Tamerlane's claims to be the wrath of God. One can detect the highlights of Tamerlane's career which have caught the imagination of the Renaissance humanists either by the place they are given in the order the themes are developed in the accounts or by the survival of these themes in the abridged ones. Fregoso uses Tamerlane as an example in his studies on the moral virtues of great men. Tamerlane's discipline illustrates the value of abstinence and his defeat of Bajazet, the fate of the proud.[306] As the myth grows, Tamerlane is increasingly removed from the historical and geographical contexts in which he lived and fought. Renaissance historians have neither knowledge of Mongolian history nor the understanding of foreign civilizations.[307] Cruelty is expected of a Mongolian ruler and, consequently, Tamerlane becomes an invincible ruler whose deeds are characterized principally by ruthlessness and cruelty.[308]

The Tamerlane of the myth gradually rises to the heights of a semi-divine hero, mid-way between God and man.[309] As a personification of the Wrath of God, Tamerlane sees himself entrusted with the task of destroying

---

304. See ibid., p. 560.

305. See ibid.

306. See ibid., p. 565.

307. See ibid., p. 566 ff.

308. See ibid., p. 570.

309. See ibid., p. 573.

the world in order that he may fulfil the Divine will. Tamerlane embodies the humanist's image of the conqueror-type. Louis Le Roys is the last of the Renaissance chroniclers to describe Tamerlane according to the tradition set by Piccolomini. He offers no new material but his Tamerlane has acquired a mythical dimension[310] mainly as an effect of the chronicler's sympathy for the hero who played so important a part in the defeat of the Turks. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the image of Tamerlane will change. He will become a generous and liberal hero in place of the cruel warrior of the Piccolomini tradition.[311]

Several of the authors Voegelin has used in his analysis of the Tamerlane-myth appear in Knolles's list of source materials as well as in Ellis-Fermor's analysis of the background material available on the subject of Tamerlane.[312] Marlowe possibly consulted several of these works while at Canterbury or at Cambridge. Ideas present in his play make obvious the fact that he borrowed from more than one author. However, scholars have singled out a few of these sources as the ones which seem to have been uppermost in Marlowe's mind when he wrote his Tamburlaine. These sources were part of the Tamerlane-myth tradition initiated by Piccolomini and handed down through the sixteenth century. Voegelin has described these sources as agents in the mythicizing process of Timur's career in terms of humanism. What he has not pointed out is how religious influences played an important role in determining the thought patterns of the Tamerlane-myth as it was

---

310. See ibid., p. 574.

311. See ibid., pp. 581-582 and notes.

312. Voegelin uses the following references listed in the order in which they appear in his study: Poggio, Enea Silvio del Piccolomini, Joannes Campasius, Nicolaus Venetus, Niccolo dei Conti, Bartolomeo Sacchi, Platina, Palmierus, Eusebius Caesariensis Episcopi Chronicon, Auberti Miraei Chronicon, Ioannis Baptistae Egnatii Veneti de Origine Turcorum, Robertus Monachus, Nicolaus Euboicus Saguntinus, Chalcondyles. Ioannus Ramus, Andrea a Lacuna, Paulus Giovius, Francesco Sansovino, Simon Grynaeus, Mathias a Michov, Wolfgang Drechsler, Curio, Joachimus Camerarius, Sebastianus Munsterus, Antonius Torquatus, Baptista Fulgosius Fregosus, Andrea Cambinus, Pedro Mexia, Louis Le Roy, Joannes Leunclavius, Petrus Perondinus, Phrantzes, Dukas, Spandouginus, Philippus Lonicerus, etc. Cf. above p. 88, n. 270 and p. 95, n. 297.

developed by the Renaissance humanists into the forms which reached Marlowe. This point deserves some attention. As was mentioned before, the aim of this study is not to identify sources which Marlowe might have used but to study the significance of the religious content of the play. While some of this religious content is derived from Marlowe's own dramatic creativity, as will be seen later,[313] some of it is also derived from the sources he used. Therefore, the study of religious influences on the Tamerlane-myth tradition applies at the same time to the sources Marlowe possibly used and to his play in as much as he made use of these sources. However, for the sake of brevity, the story of Tamburlaine, as Marlowe found it in the three main works he is believed to have used, will be examined, after which the religious influences which may be detected in these three sources and which apply to the Tamerlane-myth will be pointed out.

According to John D. Jump,[314] Marlowe seems to have borrowed his material especially from two main sources, at least for the first part of the play. One of these, the longest sixteenth-century account of Tamburlaine's career, was the Magni Tamerlanis Scytharum Imperatoris Vita (Florence, 1553)[315] written in Latin by the Italian Petrus Perondinus (Pietro Perondino). Perondinus included all the sixteen themes found in Piccolomini's account and enlarged on several aspects of Tamerlane's life.[316] Thus, the growth of Tamerlane's power, the plight of Constantinople, the fatal encounter with Bajazet, Tamerlane's liberalities towards the Emperor Emmanuel and towards his own people, the Parthians, his cruelties, his religion, Tamerlane's wife and children, are all given some attention by

---

313. See below, pp. 272 ff., 317 ff., 350 ff., 422 ff., etc.

314. See John D. Jump, ed., Tamburlaine the Great: Parts I and II (University of Nebraska, 1967), pp. xii-xiii.

315. The edition used in this study is Petrus Perondinus, Magni Tamerlanis Scytharum Imperatoris Vita (Basileae, 1556).

316. In Voegelin, op. cit., n. 300, cf. pp. 557-558, 558 and n. 1 and p. 575, n.

Perondinus. The other accounts Marlowe is supposed to have used stem from one Spanish work, that is, from Pedro Mexia's Silva de Varia Leccion (Seville, 1543). By the time Marlowe was writing his play, Mexia's chronicle was available in Italian, French, and English. Thomas Fortescue had produced an abridged English version of Mexia's book in his The Foreste or Collection of Histories (London, 1571).[317] The other English account was a translation by George Whetstones from Claude Gruget's French version published in Lyons in 1552[318] and entitled The English Myrror (London, 1586).[319] T. C. Izard has made a close study of Marlowe's use of Whetstones's account of the career of Tamerlane.[320] By comparing the text of Marlowe's Tamburlaine with the story written by Whetstones, Izard has concluded that Whetstones's version contains every item of information found in Fortescue plus details which the latter had changed or omitted. Whenever these variations occur, Marlowe seems to have followed Whetstones's translation.[321] Moreover, he observes that Marlowe's development of the plot in the first part of the play closely parallels in matter and pace the account found in Whetstones. While this account is sketchy and gives little insight into the character of Tamburlaine, it does provide several episodes and details which Marlowe incorporated into his drama. These three accounts mentioned above will be used as a basis to reconstruct the story of Tamerlane as Marlowe probably knew it when he wrote his play. Whenever details mentioned

---

317. Thomas Fortescue. The Foreste or Collection of Histories.... (London, 1571), fol. 43, 82v - 87v.

318. Claude Gruget, Les Diverses Lecons de Pierre Messie, Gentilhomme de Sévile. Avec trois Dialogues du dit auteur, contenans variables et memorables histoires, mises en François ... (Lyon, 1577).

319. George Whetstones, The English Myrror. (London, 1586), pp. 15-16, 71-72, 78-83 and 113.

320. T. C. Izard, "The Principal Source for Marlowe's Tamburlaine", MLN 58 (1943), pp. 411-417.

321. Fortescue translated Gruget's "une tente blanche" to "an Ensigne white" (see op. cit., n. 317, fol. 86), while Marlowe returns to the idea of "tents" when he treats of Tamburlaine's customary manner of holding sieges: see Izard, op. cit., n. 320, p. 412. Fortescue also omitted the information about Bajazet being used as a footstool which Marlowe used: see ibid., p. 413. These details as Marlowe used them are found in Whetstones.

by these authors occur also in other accounts, these will be pointed out in the reference notes. From the frequency with which these details appear in contemporary accounts, the probability of Marlowe's finding and assimilating this data from other works as well as from these three accounts may be assessed. The fact that these three works are used as the basis of Tamerlane's story does not exclude the possibility of referring to other works throughout the study when doing so is relevant to the point being discussed.

Renaissance chroniclers refer to Tamerlane's low and obscure origins.[322] He was born in Samarqand,[323] a descendant of Parthians,[324] from parents of base condition.[325] Tamerlane was soon put in the fields as a herdsman

322. See Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 235. See also Aenius Syluius, Magistrum huius operis libri cronicarum ac figuris et ymaginibus ab inicio mundi (Nuremburg, 1493), fol. ccxxxvii; Chalcondylas in De Vigenere, op. cit., n. 29, p. 243; Ashton, op. cit., n. 297, fol. xii, n.; Petrus Bizarus, Rervm Persicarvm Historia, Initia Gentis, Mores, instituta, resque gestas ad haec vsque tempora complectens:... (Frankfurt, 1601, Preface dated 1583), p. 239; Alexandrus Guagninius, Sarmatiae Evropeae Descriptio, qvae regnvm Poloniae, Litvaniam, Samogitiam, Rvssiam Massoviam, Prvssiam, Pomeraniam, Livoniam, et Moschoviae, Tartariaeqve partem complectitur. (Spirae, 1581), fol. 54 v; Philippus Lonicerus, Chronicorvm Tvrcicorvm ..., Tomvs Primvs ... (Francoforti ad Moenvm, 1578), Liber I, fol. 13 v; Mathia à Michovia, Polinicarvm rervm, in qvo generales et copiosae historiae compraehendentur (Basileae, 1582), Tomvs II, p. 645; Newton, op. cit., n. 44, fol. 129; Palmierus, in En damvs Chronicon divinvm plane opvs ervditissimorvm avtorvm, repetitvm ab ipso mvndi initio, ad annvm vsqve salvtis MDXII (Basileae, 1529), fol. 133; Richerius, De origine Turcarum et Othomani successorumque ... (1550), p. 223.

323. See Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 235. See also Ashton, op. cit., n. 297, fol. xii v; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 13 v ; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 239.

324. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 79. See also Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 83; Aeneus Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxvii; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, pp. 201 (misnumbered as 164) and 223; Bornard de Girard, L'Histoire de France (Paris, 1576), p. 963; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 3.

325. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 79. See also Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 83; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 235; Fregosius, Exempla Virtvtvm et vitiorvm, atque etiam aliarum rerum maxime memorabilivm, fvtvra lectori supra modum magnus Thesaurus, Historicas conscriptæ, per authores qui in hac scriptorvm classe, ivdicio, doctrina et fide apud Graecos et Latinos praestantissimi habentur: ... (Basileae, n.d., Preface dated 1555), p. 783.

keeping the herds among other youths of his condition.[326] Whetstones refers to Tamerlane as shepherd.[327] He also notes Tamerlane's ambitious drives as a youth. Very early in his life, Tamerlane displayed "a reaching and an imaginative mind, strength and comeliness of body".[328] Perondinus echoes these traits of Tamerlane,[329] and develops his growth in power at greater length than does Whetstones,[330] but all agree to the fact that Tamerlane quickly rose to great military strength. Whetstones describes how Tamerlane induced his fellow-herdsmen to choose him for their king; he then exacted an oath of obedience from them and forced them to sell their herds.[331] In a short time, Tamerlane managed to assemble 500 herdsmen and labourers[332] whose principal occupation was to rob merchants they met on their way.[333] In this way, Tamerlane was able to increase both his army and his means. Other chroniclers dwell on Tamerlane's frauds, treachery, deceit, and pillage during this period of his career[334] and on the misfortunes he met in one of his escapades which left him lame for the rest of his life.[335] Whetstones, as well as Fortescue, are both strangely

---

326. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 79. See also Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 83.

327. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 81.

328. Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 79. See also Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 83.

329. See Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 235.

330. See ibid., pp. 236-237.

331. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 79. See also Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 83; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 15; Fregosius, op. cit., n. 325, p. 783.

332. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 79. See also Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 83 v; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 15; Fregosius, op. cit., n. 325, p. 783.

333. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 79. See also Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 83 v; Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lx, col. b - fol. lx v, col. a; Fregosius, op. cit., n. 325, p. 783.

334. See De Vigenere, op. cit., n. 29, p. 147.

335. See Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 246. See also De Vigenere, op. cit., n. 29, p. 147; Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxix v, col. b and fol. lxi, col. b; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 15; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 244; Fregosius, op. cit., n. 325, p. 783.

silent about this physical handicap which, nevertheless, gave Timur his name in European accounts. Fortescue and Perondinus note how Tamerlane shared all the spoil among his companions, how he was faithful and kind to them[336] so that, as Whetstones points out, they, in turn, "dayly increased his strength".[337] It may be noted that the predatory activities of the youthful Timur have found their way into the accounts of the legendary youthful Tamerlane. On the other hand, Whetstones's reference to Tamerlane as a shepherd links him with the heroes of the Bible and of antiquity. One may note that Marlowe has included most of the above details in his play.[338]

Various versions describe how Tamerlane came in contact with royalty and became a king himself. Whetstones's account is built around a small core of historical facts which are still vaguely perceptible through the haze of fancy absorbed into the Tamerlane-myth. The struggles between Timur and the Sultan Hussein of Samarqand which end in the defeat and death of Hussein[339] become the episode of the king of Parthia's attempt to overpower Tamerlane. The episode ends with the king losing his best captain and a thousand horsemen, as Mycetes does in Marlowe's play. Timur's opportune

---

336. See Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 83 v. See also Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 236; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 15; Pregosius, op. cit., n. 325, p. 783.

337. Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 79.

338. Several traits of Marlowe's Tamburlaine correspond to the ones enumerated in the accounts. Marlowe's Tamburlaine comes from Samarqand (2T 4.1.105) from shepherd parents (1T 1.2.35). The first allusion to Tamburlaine in the play associates him with his ambition for rule (1T 1.1.41-43). Tamburlaine presides over a scene of oaths or pledges early in the play (1T 1.2.232 ff.) and is proclaimed king by his followers (1T 2.7.56-57). Tamburlaine faces his first major opponent Theridamas with a fighting force 500 strong (1T 1.2.121), men who had previously been occupied with robbing merchants (1T 1.1.37-40). Marlowe mentions Tamburlaine's troops being increased with thieves and robbers of his own kind (1T 2.2.21-24).

339. See above, pp. 58-59 and p. 59, n. 105.

use of the rivalries between the two brother rulers of Khorazan[340] have been transformed and contracted into one incident, the defeat of the king and his brother under the pretext of restoring peace and order in the kingdom of Persia. Thus, the complex episodes and strategies which characterize Timur's quest for the control of his native Samarqand and the surrounding regions have been stylised and simplified while the motives justifying this quest have been preserved. What Marlowe has done with this incident in his play remains to be analysed. Thus the historical foundation of several episodes in the early phase of Timur's career have been vaguely preserved in the Tamerlane-myth. Fortescue notes the prestige Tamerlane enjoyed at this time in his new position as king of Persia and conqueror of many countries when he says:

> This beying king nowe, and Emperour, of sundrie Realmes, and Countries in Asia, greate troupes came to him still, out of euery quarter, besides these that were in anie respect his subiectes, for the onely fame, of his honour, and vertue.[341]

Marlowe includes this idea in his play when he makes Tamerlane, who is yet to be made a king, prophesy that all "The world will strive with hostes of men at armes, / To swarme unto the Ensigne" he supports (1T 2.3.13-14). One cannot help but suspect that, by choosing to incorporate the thought in these lines, Marlowe might have intended to evoke Biblical connotations. Tamerlane plans to do with his sword what Christ has done with the cross.[342]

Whetstones, Fortescue, and Perondinus describe Tamerlane the man. In appearance and manner, Tamerlane is said to have resembled Hannibal of Carthage as he is often described in ancient writings and as his effigy on

---

340. See above, pp. 71-72 and p. 71, n. 168.

341. Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 84 v.

342. Christ says this of himself: "And I, if I were lift vp from the earth, will drawe all men vnto me": G. V., John 12: 32. The Geneva Bible adds the following note to explain this verse: "The crosse is the meane to gather the Church of God together, and to drawe men to heauen": (n. (k)), meaning "not onely the Iews but also the Gentiles" (n. (l)), that is, all the world.

coins reveals.[343] From his eyes deep in his forehead, emanated a fierce and cruel spirit which spared neither age nor sex.[344] He had a shrewd mind.[345] Perondinus describes Tamerlane as of stature tall.[346] His body, chest, arms and other limbs were balanced and well-proportioned.[347] His treacherous deeds inspired fear and terror. And yet Fortescue describes Tamerlane the man as "verie courteous, liberall, doying honour to all menne, accordynge to their demerites that woulde accompanie, or follow him, feared therefore equally, and loued of the people."[348]

The image of Timur's excellent military discipline has survived in the legendary accounts of Tamerlane's career.[349] Tamerlane's punishments were so severe that there were never any mutinees or brawls in his armies.[350] His government and order were so efficient that his camps seemed a goodly

---

343. On the description of Tamerlane as revealed in descriptions, or on coins, see Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 246 (misnumbered as 244). See also Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 5v; Aeneus Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 244; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 226.

344. See Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, pp. 241 and 246 (misnumbered as 244). See also Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 244.

345. See Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 241. See also Pavli Iovii Novocomensis Opera qvotqvot extant omnia. Ærndis accurate repurgata, vivisque imaginibus elegantor et opportune suis locis illustrata (Basileae, 1578), p. 69; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 244.

346. See Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 246 (misnumbered as 244). Hayton says that Tamerlane was "de stature moyenne": see op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxix v, col. b. See also Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 244; Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, p. 67.

347. Chroniclers describe Tamerlane in these words in spite of the fact that he was lame: see above, p. 58 and n. 102 and p. 103.

348. Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 84.

349. On Tamerlane's discipline and/or incidents deriving from it, see Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 84; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 246 (misnumbered as 244); Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 15 - 15 v; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 4; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 225, Fregosius, op. cit., n. 325, pp. 746 and 819.

350. See Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 84. See also Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 4; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 225.

city[351] wherein all necessary offices and goods were found, and from which the fear of being robbed was absent.[352] The image of Timur controlling a vast "multitude of soldiers" has been made that of Tamerlane, as well. In an instant, at the least sign or sound of trumpet, every man was found in his charge or quarter though his army was huge, greater than any other, even greater than those of Darius or Xerxes.[353] He wished his soldiers "to euermore glory, in their martiall prowes, their vertue, and wisedome onely".[354] He paid them their salary and wages without fraud. "He honoured, he praised, he imbrast, and kiste theim, kepyng theim notwithstandying in awe and subiection".[355] Thus the chroniclers have preserved some of the physical traits of Timur, some of the grandeur of the ruler, some of the military skills and the efficiency of the war leader. The same cannot be said of certain episodes found in these popular accounts of the story of Tamerlane.

It is interesting to note how the authors of the Tamerlane-myth imposed a pattern upon Timur's methods of besieging cities as the following description shows. Tamerlane's three-day sieges were conducted as follows. By raising white tents[356] on the first day, the citizens were offered their goods, their lives, and their liberties in return for a complete surrender.

---

351. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 80; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 84. See also Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxiiii v, col. b; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 4; Aeneus Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxvii.

352. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 80. See also Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxiiii v, col. b; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 4; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 244.

353. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 80; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 84 v; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 240. See also Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lx, col. b; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 3 v; Fregosius, op. cit., n. 325, p. 783. So does Bajazet compare himself and his power to those of Darius and Xerxes: see De Vigenere, op. cit., n. 29, p. 142, n.

354. Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 84 - 84 v.

355. Ibid., fol. 84 v.

356. See above, p. 101, n. 321.

Tamerlane's red tents on the second day indicated that, if the citizens of the besieged city yielded, all would be saved except the masters and the heads of the households. Tamerlane's black tents on the third day spelt doom for all. At this stage of the siege, hopes to obtain Tamerlane's mercy were futile; all would be slain without respect of man, woman, or child.[357] Thus Timur's methods of holding sieges have been transformed. Whereas Timur's historians enjoy describing their leader's engineering skills in subduing the besieged fort or city, Tamerlane's chroniclers lay emphasis on the destruction in human terms. Timur's methods of warfare have become stylized into a setting in which time, colour, and action have become symbolic. Reminiscences of Timur's love of colour reflected in his display of white, red and gold fabrics and hangings and in his use of a black ensign to signal his soldiers to pillage and massacre[358] have been refashioned into a pattern for holding sieges, a pattern not devoid of its Biblical connotations as will be seen later.[359] Ritual and ceremony introduced in Tamerlane's methods easily invest him and his deeds with a religious dimension. They promote Tamerlane into a kind of warlord or semi-deity whose rule and sway are embodied in form and style. And so, around Timur's love of colour and decorum as a core, Tamerlane's chroniclers have elaborated a fanciful method of warfare which, however out of keeping with Timur's war schemes and denied by many authors as it may be,[360] is yet

---

357. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, pp. 81-82; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 86; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 245 (misnumbered as 243). See also Newton, op. cit., n. 44, fol. 129; Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxii v, col. b - fol. lxiii, col. a; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 15 v; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 5; Aeneas Syvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 242; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 226; De Girard, op. cit., n. 324, p. 963; Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, p. 69; Wolfgangus Drechslerius, De Saracenorvm et Tvrcorvm Origine et Rebvs Gestis Chronicum (Basileae, 1556), p. 228.

358. See above, p. 68.

359. See below, pp. 109-110 and 420 ff.

360. Du Bec qualifies these tents as fables invented by some Italians who "en ont escrit des follies": see op. cit., n. 276, p. 5.

in keeping with Timur's nature. What Marlowe does with this myth in his play will be examined later.[361]

Reminiscences of Timur's cruelties also undergo a similar kind of metamorphosis. Fortescue relates the following incident, told with variations by several chroniclers, to illustrate Tamerlane's brutality. Fortescue claims Pope Pius, probably Piccolomini, is the one who reported this episode.[362]

> On a tyme besiegyng, a strong and riche citie, which neither on the first, or second would yelde to him, which only daies, were daies of mercie, ..., on the third day neuertheless affiyng on hope vncertaine, to obtaine at his handes some mercie, and pardon, opened their gates, sendyng forth in order towardes hym, all their wemen, and children in white appareled, bearing eche in their handes a branche of Oliue, criyng with haute voice, humbly requestynge, and demaundyng pardon, in maner so pitifull, and lamentable to beholde, that besides him none other was but woulde haue accepted their solemne submission. This Tamburlaine, not withstandyng that beheld theim a farre of, in this order issuyng, so farre then exiled from all kinde of pitie, that he commaunded forthwith, a certaine troope of horsemen to ouer runne, to murther, and kill theym, not leauyng one a liue, of what condition soeuer, and after sackyng the Citie, rased it, euen vnto the verie foundations.[363]

In this account, the chronicler has included within the pattern of the three-day siege an illustration of the kind of cruelty of which Timur was capable according to the historical accounts of his campaigns.[364] One detects Christian frames of thought in this version of Tamerlane's massacres. Pleas for peace are couched in the solemnity of processional rites, reminiscent of church and pilgrim ceremonies. The participants,

---

361. See below, pp. 417 ff.

362. See Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 86.

363. Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 86 - 86 v. See also Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, pp. 15-16, 82; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 245 (misnumbered as 243); Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxii v, col. b - fol. lxiii, col. a; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 15 v; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 5; Aeneus Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 226; De Girard, op. cit., n. 324, p. 963. The event without the olive branches as occurring in Siva is mentioned in Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 239.

364. See above, pp. 69 ff. and p. 69, n. 156.

women and children dressed in white, suggest the helplessness and innocence of victims, two supposedly powerful arguments to obtain the clemency of a tyrant. Their mission symbolized by branches of olive, as tokens of peace, recall Palm Sunday processions and the mission of Christ in this world. One can easily imagine their "criyng with haute voice" taking the form of cadenced hymns or chanted litanies of supplications. These pilgrims for peace humbly requesting and demanding pardon, solemnly offering their submission suggest that chroniclers were familiar with ceremonies in which participants, inspired by similar feelings, made or offered their religious commitment to the Most High. By introducing these forms of ceremonies, probably drawn from their own experience, the Christian chroniclers suggest a divine dimension to the extraordinary warrior who saved Christendom from disaster. Thanks to Divine Providence, Timur was a divinely-sent agent who had freed the Christians from the perpetual Turkish threat.[365] This view which lingered on in the consciousness of Christendom found a channel of expression in legends of this type. These legends invested Tamburlaine with a dimension which made him a hero worthy of the admiration of the Christians in spite of the revolting nature of his cruelty.

By far, the highlight of Timur's career was the defeat of Bajazet. Most accounts of the Tamerlane-myth do not dwell at length on the political

---

365. De Girard describes, the appearance of Tamburlaine in terms of a great tempest hitting the earth. Here are his own words on the subject: "Vne plus grande tempeste qui vint fondre sur la terre arresta l'orage que les Turcs apprestoient contre les Chrestiens": see op. cit., n. 324, pp. 962-963. Shute describes the event as a Providential Act of God in the following terms:

> "And there is no doute, that yf god by extraordinarie meanes, had not prouided for it, the citie of constantinopole /sic/ the which in time before, ...; had ben the hed, ..., of the greatest part of the worlde, had at that tyme fallen into the hands of the most cruell and Barbarouse nation of Turques, had not ben Tamerlano, ... entred the lesser Asia, and assailed it with such furie, that he constrened Baiazith to abandone Constantinople: ...": op. cit., n. 324, fol. 3.

women and children dressed in white, suggest the helplessness and innocence of victims, two supposedly powerful arguments to obtain the clemency of a tyrant. Their mission symbolized by branches of olive, as tokens of peace, recall Palm Sunday processions and the mission of Christ in this world. One can easily imagine their "criyng with haute voice" taking the form of cadenced hymns or chanted litanies of supplications. These pilgrims for peace humbly requesting and demanding pardon, solemnly offering their submission suggest that chroniclers were familiar with ceremonies in which participants, inspired by similar feelings, made or offered their religious commitment to the Most High. By introducing these forms of ceremonies, probably drawn from their own experience, the Christian chroniclers suggest a divine dimension to the extraordinary warrior who saved Christendom from disaster. Thanks to Divine Providence, Timur was a divinely-sent agent who had freed the Christians from the perpetual Turkish threat.[365] This view which lingered on in the consciousness of Christendom found a channel of expression in legends of this type. Those legends invested Tamburlaine with a dimension which made him a hero worthy of the admiration of the Christians in spite of the revolting nature of his cruelty.

By far, the highlight of Timur's career was the defeat of Bajazet. Most accounts of the Tamerlane-myth do not dwell at length on the political

---

365. De Girard describes, the appearance of Tamburlaine in terms of a great tempest hitting the earth. Here are his own words on the subject: "Vne plus grande tempeste qui vint fondre sur la terre arresta l'orage que les Turcs apprestoient contre les Chrestiens": see op. cit., n. 324, pp. 962-963. Shute describes the event as a Providential Act of God in the following terms:

> "And there is no doute, that yf god by extraordinarie meanes, had not prouided for it, the citie of constantinopole [sic] the which in time before, ...; had ben the hed, ..., of the greatest part of the worlde, had at that tyme fallen into the hands of the most cruell and Barbarouse nation of Turques, had not ben Tamerlano, ... entred the lesser Asia, and assailed it with such furie, that he constrened Baiazith to abandone Constantinople: ...": op. cit., n. 324, fol. 3.

situation in Constantinople or in the East prior to Timur's intervention in the affairs of Europe. Perondinus merely mentions that, as a result of Emmanuel's desperate appeals for help,[366] some European princes had managed to organize an army to fight Bajazet and force him briefly to interrupt his long siege[367] by the battle of Nicopolis in 1396, a battle which had ended in disaster for the Christian troops. He mentions that Bajazet's resumed siege of Constantinople would surely have ended in the fall of the city had not news reached him that Tamerlane was entering into his territory and had already taken many towns, cities, and provinces.[368]

Chroniclers describe Bajazet as a great leader, probably as an indirect way of enhancing the merits of Tamerlane for having defeated him. Fortescue mentions the great numbers of Bajazet's troops at this time; he had as many horsemen as had the great Tamerlane along with a great number of other soldiers both old and of much experience from the continual warfare Bajazet had waged against the Christians.[369] He points out that while Bajazet had subdued the territories around Constantinople, he had "growen to more wealth, and more feared, then any Prince in the world".[370] Bajazet

---

366. See Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, pp. 238-239.

367. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 71. See also Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 13; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, pp. 238-239; Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, p. 72; Iohannis Dvbravius, Historia Boiemica ... Thoma Iordano Medico nouis Genealogiarum, Episcoporum, Regum, Ducum Catalogis, necessariis quinetiam Annotationibvs sic ornata et illustrata, vt nunc demum edita dici possit (Basileae, 1575), p. 240; Ioannis Baptista Egnatius, De origine Turcarum (Basileae, 1556), p. 184; Nicolaus Evboicus Saguntinus, De origine et rebvs gestis Tvrcarvm ... (Basileae, 1556), p. 188 (misnumbered as 187).

368. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 81; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 84 v; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 239. See also Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. xxxvii v, col. b - fol. xxxviii, col. a and fol. lxvi v, col. a - col. b; Ashton, op. cit., n. 297, fol. xii v; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 13 v ; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 201 (misnumbered as 164); Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, pp. 68 and 72; Egnatius, op. cit., n. 367, pp. 184-185; Saguntinus, op. cit., n. 367, p. 188 (misnumbered as 187); Andreas à Lacuna Seco, De Origine Regvm Tvrcarvm compendiosa ovaedam perioche ... (Basileae, 1556), p. 218; Iohannes Leunclavius, Annales Michaeli Glycae Siculi, qvi lectori praeter alia cognitu iucunda et utilia, Byzantiam historiam universam exhibent: ... (Basileae, 1572), p. 504.

369. See Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 84 v.

370. Ibid.

was "now like a good, and like an expert Capitaine".[371] At one point, Bajazet, having faith in his armies, lifted the siege of Constantinople, and decided to march[372] into battle with forces estimated to have been as great as those of Tamerlane. Thus, according to the chroniclers, these two powerful captains, "two of the mightiest princes of the world",[373] neither wanting valour, policy, or any advantage of war, both equally brave, met in battle in the confines of Armenia.[374] At break of day, at the foot of mount Stella near Ankara in Bithynia,[375] began "the fiercest battaile that in any age was foughten",[376] "the most cruell, and most terrible",[377] if one considers the numbers on each side, the experience of the leaders and their soldiers, and their policy, valiant courage, and prowess.[378] There were heavy losses on both sides, so great that the dead are said to have made the waters of the Euphrates like to the Red Sea with blood.[379] The victory remained doubtful all the day.[380] Fortescue and Whetstones mention how great numbers of soldiers and captains deserted Bajazet.[381]

---

371. Ibid.

372. Ibid.

373. Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 72. Jovius refers to them as "duo maximi orbis imperatores": see op. cit., n. 345, p. 68.

374. See Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 84 v - 85.

375. See Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 240. See also Newton, op. cit., n. 44, fol. 129; Ashton, op. cit., n. 297, fol. xii v; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 241; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 201 (misnumbered as 164); Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, pp. 68 and 72; Drechslerius, op. cit., n. 357, p. 228; Egnatius, op. cit., n. 367, p. 185.

376. Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 80.

377. Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85.

378. See ibid.

379. See Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 241. See also Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 13 v - 14.

380. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, pp. 80-81; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85.

381. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 81; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85. Others say Bajazet was captured with his son and captains: See De Vigenere, op. cit., n. 29, p. 207; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 241.

In spite of these setbacks, Bajazet resisted the fury of his enemies with unabated spirit.[382] "But such was Gods will",[383] that Bajazet lacking reinforcements and "by the ouercharge of foes"[384] was unhorsed, taken prisoner and presented to Tamerlane.[385] Whetstones and others make Bajazet an example of the "incertaintye of worldly fortunes ..."[386] Bajazet, the mightiest emperor alive, "that yesterdaie was the Prince and Lorde of all the worlde almost",[387] or "of noble race and linage",[388] on this day and for the rest of his life, he was fallen unto extreme misery,[389] driven to feed among the dogs, "fellowe to theim in companie",[390] abased by one who in the

---

382. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 81; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85.

383. Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 81.

384. Ibid.

385. See Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 241. See also De Vigenere, op. cit., n. 29, p. 207; Newton, op. cit., n. 44, fol. 129; Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. xxxviii, col. a; Ashton, op. cit., n. 297, fol. xii v; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 14; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 3 v; Guagninius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 54 v; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 225; Fregosius, op. cit., n. 325, p. 1028; Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, pp. 68 and 72; Dubravius, op. cit., n. 367, p. 240.

386. Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 81. Fortescue moralizes on the fate of Bajazet: "This tragidie might suffice, to withdrawe men, from this transitorie pompe, and honour, acquaintyng theimselues with Heauen and with heauenly thinges onely": op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85–85 v. Perondinus presents Bajazet's fate as an example of fortune: see op. cit., n. 315, p. 242. The idea of the fickleness of fortune is mentioned in various ways. "Totique Asiae fortunae ludentis miserabile spectaculum praeberet": Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 14. "Adeo fortuna esse bellorum deam ac dominam": Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 224. Bajazet was "ad spectaculum insigne mutabilis fortunae": Theodorus Bibliander, Temporvm a condito mundo usque ad ultimam ipsius aetatem supputatio, partitio que exactior (Basileae, 1601; the dedicatory epistle is dated 1558), p. 211.

387. Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85.

388. Ibid.

389. Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85. See also Whetstones, op.cit., n. 319, p. 81.

390. Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85. See also Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 81; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 242; Hayton, op. cit, n. 91, fol. lxvii, col. a; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 14; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 3 v; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 201 (misnumbered as 164), De Girard, op. cit., n. 324, p. 963; Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, p. 72; Dubravius, op. cit., n. 367, p. 240.

beginning was but a poor shepherd.[391] His wife was doomed to share Bajazet's captivity.

Much is made of Bajazet's captivity in the Tamerlane-myth tradition. Several accounts agree about the treatment he received from his captor. Bajazet was taken and shown around Asia[392] bound up in chains[393] and closed up in an iron cage.[394] Tamerlane used him as a footstool to mount his

---

391. Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85. See also Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 81.

392. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 72; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 242. See also Newton, op. cit., n. 44, fol. 129; Ashton, op. cit., n. 297, fol. xii v - fol. xiii; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 14; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 3 v; Aeneus Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 242; Guagninius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 54; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 225; Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, p. 69; Drechslerius, op. cit., n. 357, p. 228; etc.

393. The imagination of the chroniclers made much of the image of Bajazet in chains: see Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 3 v; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 225; Baptiste Platine, Les Vies faictz et gestes des sainctz peres, papes, empereyrs Et Roys de France, Ensemble les Heresies, Scismes, Concilles, Guerres et autres choses dignes de memoire, aduenues tant en la Chrestiente que autre pays estrange, et Barbare durant le regne dung chascun diceulx, Escriptes en Latin par Baptiste Platine de Cremonne, et depuis tournees en Francoys (Paris, 1544), fol. cccIxix v; etc. The imagination of other chroniclers transformed the prisoner's bonds of the royal Bajazet into "golden chains": see Newton, op. cit., n. 44, fol. 129; Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. xxxviii, col. a and fol. lxvii, col. a; Ashton, op. cit., n. 297, fol. xii v; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 14; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 242; Guagninius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 54 v; Palmierus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 133; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 201 (misnumbered as 164); Drechslerius, op. cit., n. 357, p. 228; Dubravius, op. cit., n. 367, p. 240; Andreas, op. cit., n. 368, p. 218, Bliblíander, op. cit., n. 386, p. 211; etc.

394. A "cage" or "a cage of iron" is mentioned in the following: Whetstones op. cit., n. 319, pp. 72 and 81; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 242. See also Ashton, op. cit., n. 297, fol. xii v; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 14; Aenius Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 242; Guagninius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 54 v; Mathias, op. cit., n. 322, p. 488; Palmierus, n. 322, fol. 133; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 201 (misnumbered as 164); Fregosius, op. cit., n. 325, p. 1028; Jovius, op. cit., n. 345,pp. 69 and 72; Drechslerius, op. cit., n. 357, p. 228; Dubravius, op. cit., n. 367, p. 240; Andreas, op. cit., n. 368, p. 218; Bibliander, op. cit., n. 386, p. 211. De Girard mentions "une cage d'airain": op. cit., n. 324, p. 963. The story of Bajazet's imprisonment in a cage is typical of the distorting influence of legends upon facts. The origin of this legend is obscure and opinions vary on the subject. Apparently Arabshah, a sworn enemy of Timur, was the first to write of Bajazet in a cage: see Vattier,

Cont'd./

horse[395] or had him tied under the table during the meals and fed like a dog with the fragments from his board.[396] Some say that Tamerlane rode

---

Footnote No. 394 cont'd./

op. cit., n. 84, p. 210. Hookham explains that because Bajazet had tried to escape, he was kept in chains at night and travelled in a litter surrounded by a grille in the daytime: see op. cit., n. 70, p. 273. This would have led Arabshah to describe Bajazet as "confined like a bird in a cage": quoted in ibid., p. 274. Telfer traces the history and discusses the source of this legend. He notes that this legend appears to have been accepted by Professor Karl Friedrich Neumann who bases his opinion on the research made by J. V. Hammer-Purgstall (See Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches, Vol. I (Bk. VIII), pp. 317-323). This research, however, is not entirely accepted by Weil (ii, 96), for instance,

> on the grounds that the story of the iron cage does not emanate from Arabshah only, but also from other Arabian chroniclers. Weil equally disputes the assertion that the term "cage" was intended to signify a litter, and disagrees with Rehm (iv, 3, 151) in his interpretation of the word kafass, that it implied a litter as well as a cage, the Arabian word for the former being handedj. mahaffah. kubbet: and concludes by saying, that if Bajazet was not really carried about in a cage, his litter must have been of most peculiar construction.

The note is by Brunn: see Telfer,op. cit., n. 86, p. 127, n. 3. Ellis-Fermor notes that Phrantzes was responsible, incidentally, for the story of Bajazet's imprisonment in the iron cage. Phrantzes had misunderstood the Turkish word "kafes" which, as she notes, may mean a litter or a cage, and set off a completely legendary episode: see op. cit., n. 4, p. 24, n. 1. She adds that nothing would be "more natural than that a prisoner (who had already tried to escape) should be confined, during the long waggon treks of the Tartar army, in some kind of litter": see ibid. This would be all the more necessary if Bajazet was ill as some historians claim: see above p. 77. Pétis agrees that the cage fable was invented by some "Historians passionnez": see op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, p. xvii, n. (a).

395. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 72; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 242. See also Newton, op. cit., n. 44, fol. 129; Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxvii, col. a; Ashton, op. cit., n. 297, fol. xiii, n.; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 14; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 3 v; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 242; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 201 (misnumbered as 164); De Girard, op. cit., n. 324, p. 963; Fregosius, op. cit., n. 325, p. 1028; Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, p. 68; Drechslerius, op. cit., n. 357, p. 228; Dubravius, op. cit., n. 367, p. 240.

396. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, pp. 72 and 81; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 242. See also Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxvii, col. a; Ashton, op. cit., n. 297, fol. xiii, n.; Lonicerus,op. cit., n. 322, fol. 14; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 3 v; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, pp. 201 (misnumbered as 164) and 225; De Girard, op. cit., n. 324, p. 963; Dubravius, op. cit., n. 367, p. 240.

Bajazet around his camp on some kind of chest[397] to be mocked and laughed at by the whole army.[398] Because Tamerlane believed he had the mission of chastising the pride of tyrants,[399] he did not hesitate to degrade Bajazet and his wife in every way. Finally, out of desperation, Bajazet is believed to have killed himself.[400] Let it be said immediately that for none of the details describing Bajazet's captivity can there be found any historical evidence in the records of Timur's historians nor in those of eye-witnesses. As was mentioned before,[401] Bajazet's fate was quite the opposite to what the chroniclers describe. Obviously, some definite thought patterns were guiding the imaginations of the chroniclers when they described the tragic fate of Bajazet. Before these patterns are noted, one more incident from the accounts of the Tamerlane-myth tradition must be pointed out in connection with Tamerlane's manner of treating his victims.

This incident concerns a Genoese merchant who objected to Tamerlane's cruelty towards his victims. This merchant - why a Genoese, no one explains - favoured by Tamerlane, asks his master why he is so cruel to those who have yielded to him and begged his pardon. The merchant suggests

---

397. See De Vigenere, op. cit., n. 29, p. 209.

398. See ibid. See also Newton, op. cit., n. 44, fol. 129; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 14; Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, p. 68.

399. Tamerlane justified his treatment of Bajazet in the following words: "La divine vengeance a de coustume le plus souuent de rabaisser ainsi les presomptueux et arrogans, et les reduire au plus bas estage de la fortune": De Vigenere, op. cit., n. 29, p. 208. Tamerlane also said that Bajazet deserved to be punished for his fratricide: see Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 242. See also Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 14; Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, p. 69.

400. Bajazet is said to have brained himself: see Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 242; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 14; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 242. Elsewhere, Tamerlane is supposed to have had Bajazet beheaded: see Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. xxxviii, col. a and fol. lxx, col. a. It is even suggested that Bajazet escaped: see ibid.

401. See above, p. 66; p. 77 and notes 198 and 199.

that should Tamerlane fear that these dogs should some day bite, he could then strike out their teeth,[402] the meaning of this figurative language being that he could spoil them of their armour, and if occasion served, he might make them fight.[403] Tamerlane is most displeased with this remark and "with a countenance fiered with fury"[404] answers:

> "Thou supposest that I am a man, but thou art deceiued, for I am no other than the ire of God, and the destruction of the world:[405] and therefore see thou come no more in my sight, least I chasten thy ouer proud boldnes".[406]

The chroniclers note that the merchant was never seen again[407] and remark that, though Tamerlane was favoured with many excellencies and virtues, God had raised him principally to chasten the kings and proud people of the

---

402. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 16.

403. This man is a Genoese in Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, pp. 16 and 82; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 86 v; Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxiii, col. a; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 5; Aenius Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii; De Girard, op. cit., n. 324, p. 964. He is a Ligurian in Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 242; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 226, and an Italian in Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 246 (misnumbered as 244) and in Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 242.

404. Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 82. Tamerlane "aunswered in most furious wrath, and yre, his face redde and firie, his eyes all flamynge, with burnyng spearckles, as it were blasing out, on euerie side": Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 86 v. See also Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 246 (misnumbered as 244). "Tamerlanus obducta fronte, contortisque in illum oculis, ignem spirantibus": Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 242. Tamerlane is described in similar terms in Hayton: see op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxiii, col. a; Aenius Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 226; De Girard, op. cit., n. 324, p. 964; etc.

405. See Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 43 and 86 v; Perondinus, op. cit, n. 315 p. 246 (misnumbered as 244). See also Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxiii, col. a; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 15 v; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 5 - 5 v; Aenius Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 242; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 226; De Girard, op. cit., n. 324, p. 964.

406. Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 82. See also Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 246 (misnumbered as 244); Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxiii, col. a - col. b; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 5 v; Aenius Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, pp. 242-243; De Girard, op. cit., n. 324, p. 964; etc.

407. See Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 86 v.

earth,[408] Bajazet being one of these. The definition Tamerlane gives of himself in this episode might account for the legend of Bajazet in captivity and vice versa. What elements does this definition of Tamerlane entail and how do they determine the legendary fate of Bajazet?

Clearly, the interest of the Christians in the historical Timur was centred on the fact that he was the only military leader who had succeeded in defeating and literally annihilate the arch-enemy of Christendom. Christian countries could not help but relish the fact that Bajazet had met and been defeated by an opponent equal to him. Bajazet had been obnoxious to them first and foremost as an enemy of the Christian powers of Europe and secondly as the symbol of the Moslem threat to the Christian faith. For these reasons, Bajazet was the enemy of the true faith and of God's people, as the Biblical enemies had been of Israel. God had sent scourges to destroy the enemies of Israel. Similarly, God had again sent another scourge to rid the Christians of their enemy. Consequently, Tamerlane's function as a scourge was central to his career. Christian chroniclers naturally modelled Tamerlane's treatment of Bajazet on the kind of treatment the Biblical scourges inflicted upon their victims, as will be studied later.[409] One is little surprised to find that this theme is also central in the accounts of the Tamerlane-myth. Very early in his career, chroniclers identify Tamerlane as the terror of the world, the destruction from the Orient, as the wrath or the ire of God, the ruin of the world.[410] It is

---

408. See Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxx, col. b; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 14; Palmierus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 133.

409. See below, pp. 591 ff. and corresponding notes.

410. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 82. See also Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 43 and 86 v; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 246 (misnumbered as 244). Tamburlan "se nommait lyre de dieu": Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lx, col. b. "Cuyde tu que ie soye un homme, tu es bien abuse. Car ie suis lire de Dieu et la destruction du monde": ibid., fol. lxiii, col. a. See also Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 16.
cont'd./

interesting to note that while neither Whetstones nor Fortescue refer to Tamerlane precisely as the "scourge of God", they describe the role of Tamerlane as the punisher of the wicked at some length. Whetstones uses the Latin form of the expression, that is "Flagellum Dei"[411] and adds that the hero was "worthy the name of vengeance".[412] Furthermore, Whetstones also categorizes Tamerlane among "the rods of Gods ire, and quellers of many millions of innocentes",[413] whose mission it is to chastise or, in other words, to be a scourge. Thus the Christian humanists responsible for the elaboration of the Tamerlane-myth have summarized the frequent and lengthy explanations of the historical Timur as a religious figure in two laconic statements. Tamerlane was a "flagellum Dei" and a "minister of God". It must be remembered that similar expressions had already been used in connection with Timur by his historians.[414] However, to use these expressions in a Christian context is quite a different matter from using them in a Moslem context. The significance of a war waged by a Biblical or a Christian scourge is other than that attached to a Moslem "holy war", as will be pointed out later.[415] Timur's historians used these terms to suggest

---

Footnote No. 410 cont'd./

"Yf thou doste thincke that I am a man thou arte much deceuid, for I saye to the that I am the wrath of God, sent to plague, and punishe the worlde": Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 5 - 5 v. "Tu me hominem ... arbitraris falleris. Ira dei ego sum et orbis vastitas": Aenius Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii. "Le Dei maximi irum esse, as deprauati seculi funestam cladem": Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 242. "Orbem terrarum terrore sui nominis immleret": Mathias, op. cit., n. 322, p. 645. "Si me hominem esse arbitraro, falleris: equidem ira dei sum, et ruina ac pernicies hominum": Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 226. "Comment miserable chetif ne sçais-tu que la peste, la ruine et la desolation de la terre est en ma main?": De Girard, op. cit., n. 324, p. 964; etc.

411. "Il ne fault doubter que cestoyt ung foyt que dieu auoit enuoye pour pour soy venger des pechez des peuples": Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxx, col. b. See also Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 15, above p. 84, and below, pp. 446 ff. and 591 ff.

412. Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 15.

413. See ibid., p. 113.

414. For Timur as a scourge, see above, p. 84 and notes 246 and 247. For Timur as a "servant of God", see above, p. 84.

415. See above, p. 64 and notes 131, 132; below, pp. 315-316 and notes.

the close relationship which, in their minds, existed between God and Timur, to explain that Timur was constantly fulfilling and serving the express wishes of God, and to justify the wars and massacres carried out by this hero-warrior. However, by the time the Tamerlane-myth reached the Elizabethans, almost all traces of the Moslem dimension of Timur had been discarded. Perondinus is one chronicler who notes that while Tamerlane kept his religious allegiances to himself, one was aware of his Moslem leniencies only by the care he took to assure that the Moslem temples be spared in the course of his destructive campaigns.[416] There is almost nothing left in the chronicles which might keep alive in the mind of the reader Timur's militancy in the interests of Islam.

As a result, these same terms read by a Christian draw their significance from a context of Christian culture, in fact, from the Biblical significance of the term "Scourge of God". In the transfer from the historical account to the myth, these words have shed their Moslem connotations to make room for the Christian meaning attached to these expressions. Tamerlane's wars and massacres have lost the meaning of Timur's "holy wars". It is possible that the significance Timur's defeat of Bajazet had for Western Christendom was largely responsible for the disappearance of the Moslem character of Timur's activities, for, clearly, Tamerlane's motives and actions have been made congenial to the mind and ideals of the Christian humanist. Perhaps this is what Ellis-Fermor meant when she wrote:

> The story as it comes west takes on a western interpretation; motives, customs, speech and processes of the mind are all inevitably translated into a western form and made the subject of reflexions and deductions prompted by Christian habits of thought.[417]

Chroniclers go on to say that after the defeat of Bajazet, Tamerlane

---

416. See Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 247 (misnumbered as 245).

417. Ellis-Fermor, ed. cit., n. 4, p. 22.

was now in possession of Natolia.[418] He speeded towards Egypt[419] and conquered Syria, Albania, Armenia, Persia, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, and Palestine.[420] On his way he completely destroyed the impregnable fortress of Smyrna.[421] In Egypt, he defeated the Soldan and the king of Arabia[422] and would have taken all of Egypt easily had he not found the great stretches of desert too difficult for his army.[423] Antioch, Tripoli, Sebastia, Damascus and Capha met with the same fate as Smyrna.[424] His military strategy and inventiveness overcame all obstacles. In short, no problem could intimidate the dauntless Tamerlane. Indeed, he was the happiest when he faced a challenge or a strong resistance from his enemy,[425] the better to prove his military strength. Unlike Timur who plans a last war in China, Tamerlane is forced to return to Samarqand to meet the threats

---

418. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 81; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85 v.

419. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 81; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85 v; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, pp. 243-244. See also Aenius Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii; De Girard, op. cit., n. 324, p. 963; etc.

420. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 81; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85 v; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, pp. 243-244. See also Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxx, col. a; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 3; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 243; Guagninius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 54 v; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 225; Fregosius, op. cit., n. 325, p. 783; etc.

421. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 81; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85 v. See also De Vigenere, op. cit., n. 29, pp. 211 (misnumbered as 210) - 212; Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxx, col. a; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 225.

422. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 81; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85 v. See also Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 4; Aenius Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 225.

423. See Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85 v; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 244. See also Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 4; Aenius Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 243; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 225; Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, p. 69; etc.

424. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 81; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85 v. See also Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 4; Aenius Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 225.

425. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 81; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 85 v. See also Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 4.

coming from India.[426] Like Timur, the Tamerlane of the chronicles brings captures of all kinds including merchants and spoils, all to be used to embellish his city Samarqand and to make it the most beautiful city of the Orient or of the world.[427] Not the least of his captures is Bajazet who dies on the way, thus ending his career as a monarch, great and feared, who had never before known failure during his twenty years of rule.[428] Chroniclers point out that Bajazet received the punishment he deserved for being proud, presumptuous, never taking counsel nor following any other course of action but that dictated by his sole opinion and caprice.[429]

In the end, Tamerlane, this great personage of extraordinary power,[430] without disgrace of fortune, after many great victories,[431] by the cause of nature died in 1402.[432] Perondimus reports that a great and pale yellow livid comet had shone during a few months before his death.[433] It must be noted that the monogamous Tamerlane,[434] in contrast to Timur who had eight

---

426. See De Vigenere,op. cit., n. 29, pp. 212-213.

427. See Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 86 v - 87; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, pp. 243 and 247-248. Newton calls this city "Marchantum": see op. cit., n. 44, fol. 129. See also Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxiii, col. b; fol. lxvii, col. b and fol. lxx, col. b; Shute op. cit., n. 297, fol. 5 v; Aenius Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, pp. 226-227; De Girard, op. cit., n. 324, p. 964; Drechslerius, op. cit., n. 357, p. 228; etc.

428. See Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 242. Chalcondylas says twenty-five: see De Vigenere, op. cit., n. 29, p. 213. Richerius says twenty-six: see op. cit., n. 322, p. 201 (misnumbered as 164).

429. See De Vigenere,op. cit., n. 29, p. 214.

430. See Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 245.

431. See Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 87 v.

432. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 82; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 87; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 248. See also Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxx, col. b; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 15 v; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 243; Richerius, op. cit., p. 322, p. 227 (misnumbered as 221); Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, p. 69.

433. See Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 248. See also Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 243; Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, p. 69.

434. See Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 247.

coming from India.[426] Like Timur, the Tamerlane of the chronicles brings captures of all kinds including merchants and spoils, all to be used to embellish his city Samarqand and to make it the most beautiful city of the Orient or of the world.[427] Not the least of his captures is Bajazet who dies on the way, thus ending his career as a monarch, great and feared, who had never before known failure during his twenty years of rule.[428] Chroniclers point out that Bajazet received the punishment he deserved for being proud, presumptuous, never taking counsel nor following any other course of action but that dictated by his sole opinion and caprice.[429]

In the end, Tamerlane, this great personage of extraordinary power,[430] without disgrace of fortune, after many great victories,[431] by the cause of nature died in 1402.[432] Perondimus reports that a great and pale yellow livid comet had shone during a few months before his death.[433] It must be noted that the monogamous Tamerlane,[434] in contrast to Timur who had eight

---

426. See De Vigenere,op. cit., n. 29, pp. 212-213.

427. See Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 86 v - 87; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, pp. 243 and 247-248. Newton calls this city "Marchantum": see op. cit., n. 44, fol. 129. See also Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxiii, col. b; fol. lxvii, col. b and fol. lxx, col. b; Shute op. cit., n. 297, fol. 5 v; Aenius Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, pp. 226-227; De Girard, op. cit., n. 324, p. 964; Drechslerius, op. cit., n. 357, p. 228; etc.

428. See Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 242. Chalcondylas says twenty-five: see De Vigenere, op. cit., n. 29, p. 213. Richerius says twenty-six: see op. cit., n. 322, p. 201 (misnumbered as 164).

429. See De Vigenere,op. cit., n. 29, p. 214.

430. See Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 245.

431. See Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 87 v.

432. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 82; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 87; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 248. See also Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxx, col. b; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 15 v; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 243; Richerius, op. cit., p. 322, p. 227 (misnumbered as 221); Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, p. 69.

433. See Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 248. See also Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 243; Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, p. 69.

434. See Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 247.

wives,[435] left behind him only two sons,[436] some say three,[437] unlike their father in any way. As a result of their quarrels and rivalries, the empire bequeathed to them by their father,[438] fell to the sons of Bajazet within a few years after the death of Tamerlane. Callapine, Bajazet's son, soon took advantage of the situation and proclaimed himself Lord of his father's empire and fought against Sigismund of Hungary who was seeking revenge for his previous overthrow by Bajazet.[439] It is interesting to note that Marlowe also introduces an encounter between Sigismund and the Turks in the second part of the play after the death of Bajazet. In a short time, Tamerlane's empire was so reduced that soon there was no remembrance left either of him or of his descendants[440] except in the province conquered by him near the river Euphrates.[441] There, Tamerlane's descendants remained until one of them was chosen as the first Sophy. They

---

435. See above, p. 61 and n. 116.

436. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 82; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 87; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 247. Hayton says that Tamerlane had several children but that finally he had only two left: see op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxi v, col. a and fol. lxx, col. b. See also Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 15 v; Shute, op. cit., n. 297, fol. 6; Aenius Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii; Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 243; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 227 (misnumbered as 221); De Girard, op. cit., n. 324, p. 964; Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, p. 69.

437. Chalcondylas says Tamerlane had three sons; see De Vigenere, op. cit., n. 29, p. 217.

438. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, pp. 72 and 82; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 87; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 248. See also Hayton, op. cit., n. 91, fol. lxx, col. b; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 322, fol. 15 v; Aenius Sylvius, op. cit., n. 345, fol. ccxxxvii; Richerius, op. cit., n. 322, p. 227 (misnumbered as 221); Jovius, op. cit., n. 345, p. 69. See also De Vigenere, op. cit., n. 29, pp. 217 ff.

439. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 72. See also Saguntinus, op. cit., n. 367, p. 188 (misnumbered as 187).

440. See Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 87. See also Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, n. 243.

441. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, p. 82.

were still carrying on mortal wars against the Turks in the course of the sixteenth century.[442]

As was pointed out on several occasions, the story of Timur has undergone considerable transformation by the time it reaches readers in the West. It is true that a small core of historical truth has survived the erosive effects of transmission. However, elements of romance and legends have altered the career of the Oriental despot considerably. Even the language of Timur's historians has shed its metaphorical imagery and has become more like the everyday speech of the Renaissance chronicler. In the process of this metamorphosis, traces of Timur's side interests in games and learning, in sumptuous feasts and banquets have given place to the incident of major importance to the chronicler, to the defeat of Bajazet and to his captivity and death. Tamerlane, unlike Timur, is not subject to the difficult task of winning the loyalty of rebellious leaders, to the bitter sorrows of bereavements and betrayals, and to the painful interruption of cherished projects as any human would be. Traits which made the individuality of Timur have been absorbed by Tamerlane's function as a scourge and by the semi-divine aura which has become attached to his name. In the light of these changes, it has become impossible to visualize Tamerlane other than in an armour rising like the sun from humble beginnings to the zenith of power, to some moral region between humanity and deity.

As a military figure Tamerlane has undergone a drastic change as well. He is no more subject to the contingencies and harassments which normally are part of military campaigns. He looms out from the accounts as a dehumanized invincible power, impervious to obstacles, and which knows no defeat. Victories are won consistently; they almost become a matter of routine. No more are there traces of apprehension and anxiety

---

442. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 319, pp. 82-83; Fortescue, op. cit., n. 317, fol. 87 - 87 v.

before military engagements, however important these may be. Details of administrative problems in the solution of which Timur could display a remarkable degree of efficiency have almost all disappeared. Tamerlane is reduced to a disciplinary presence, a figure of gigantic military power, a sheer embodiment of energy. His soldiers and horsemen lose their identity in the vast multitude of the army.

As has been pointed out, the religious character of Timur has been transformed. Conqueror and victims are absorbed by another frame of values and norms, the Christian one of the chroniclers. As a scourge of God, Tamerlane pursues a set of values which belong to a Christian culture. However, his cruelty remains a problem, the possible reason why, according to some chroniclers, he was not blessed by the presence of a historian to record all his deeds.[443] But, on the whole, Tamerlane's presence suggests superhuman power and destiny, the prerogatives of an invincible idealized warrior worthy of a place in European catalogues of Christian illustrious men, among the great of the Western world.[444] This is the Tamerlane whom Marlowe attempts to introduce on the stage.

---

443. Perondinus tries to reconcile Tamburlaine's behaviour with religious belief. He has this to say about the subject:

> Ab hoc vero Scythico impieque profano Tamerlanis ingenio quis credet mirum religionis exemplum prodiisse? nam Sulthaniam Persarum olim regiam, cunctaque obvia inter meridiem et occasum immaniter evertens, ac inexorabili mentis feritate diruens, atque incendens passim urbes et opulida, religione tactus seu potius secreto quodam (uti forsan credi par est) afflatus numine Mahomethanorum delubris pepercit, quae adhuc praecellenti structura pulcherrima visuntur.

See op. cit., n. 315, p. 247 (misnumbered as 245). Shute attributes the fact that he fell into oblivion to his cruelty. He says "it semed that his great crueltye which he vsed towarde those that he ouercame, dyd not deserue to haue his fame celebrated by writing, ne yet that it mought long remaine to his posteritie, when Tamerlane died": see op. cit., n. 297, fol. 6.

444. As Voegelin has pointed out, (see above p. 98), Pregosius uses the career of Tamerlane to illustrate various virtues or vices: see op. cit., n. 325. Tamerlane appears in De Priscis Institvtionibvs , Liber II, pp. 732 ff., in chapter 2 entitled De Militari disciplina , p. 746; in De Indole , Liber III, in chapter 4, entitled De iis

cont'd./

However, as critics have repeatedly noted, Marlowe's hero is neither the Oriental despot of the historical accounts nor the romanticized warrior of the European ones.[445] Marlowe's Tamburlaine has something of both and more besides. Leslie Spence tries to account for the disparity between the Tamburlaine of the accounts and Marlowe's Tamburlaine by saying that the dramatist has emphasized the spiritual dimension of his hero.[446] Some have suggested that Marlowe's Tamburlaine derives his superhuman aura from the spiritual dimension which grows upon him from his mission as Scourge of God. Critics sense that the identity of Marlowe's Tamburlaine transcends that of the Scythian warrior of the European accounts. Ellis-Fermor finds that, in spite of Marlowe's use of the European accounts, a greater affinity seems to exist between his Tamburlaine and the historical Timur than between his hero and the Tamerlane of the European accounts, as she explains in the following words:

> We do not find in the pages of Marlowe's play the portrait of the Mongolian conqueror which we can now draw from contemporary testimony, though that curious penetration into the reality behind the written word, which distinguishes Marlowe's avid search for knowledge, sometimes leads him into felicity of interpretation startling to the modern scholar who knows how misleading were most of his sources.[447]

She implies that the elements present in the bulk of the European material on Tamerlane's career fail to account for the vision Marlowe had of this Scythian. While the creative power of Marlowe's genius cannot be denied, certain traits of his hero seem to demand an explanation other than that

---

Footnote No. 444 cont'd./

ovi hvmili Fortvna orti clarvm , p. 783; in De Animi moderatione Liber IIII, pp. 799 ff., in chapter 3 called De Abstinentia et continentia , p. 819; in De Hominvm lvxv atqve deliciis , Liber IX, pp. 1004 ff., in chapter 5 entitled De svperbia , p. 1028. See also Aenius Sylvius, op. cit., n. 322, fol. ccxxxvii. Tamerlane figures in other European catalogues of illustrious men.

445. See Ellis-Fermor, ed. cit., n. 4, p. 17.

446. See Leslie Spence, "Tamburlaine and Christopher Marlowe", PMLA 42 (1927), pp. 606-607.

447. See Ellis-Fermor, ed. cit., n. 4, p. 18.

of being the product of Marlowe's dramatic talent. Either Marlowe had, surprisingly to say the least, some intuitive knowledge about the magnitude of the historical Timur as a type of Oriental despot which would account for his "felicity of interpretation"[448] or he simply drew material from channels other than the European traditional accounts of Tamerlane's career. Perhaps these same channels are responsible to some extent for the common understanding which Marlowe and his audiences had of his hero. Other evidence points to such a possibility.

As has been made clear by Voegelin, the European accounts which Marlowe incorporated in part into his play were the written form of an oral lore or tradition initiated by Poggio and implemented by Piccolomini.[449] There is no inherent law in oral lore which either limits it to one tradition or sets a time limit to the development and growth of any of its component traditions. In other words, a Tamerlane-lore was possibly developing at this time with specific traits of its own as the seventeenth-century Tamerlane-lore was to have.[450] This lore was perhaps largely responsible for keeping a particular image of this great warrior alive in the minds of Europeans, including the Elizabethans.

It has been seen that there was a certain amount of literature about the Moslems in circulation in Marlowe's days. Perhaps Ellis-Fermor tends to minimize the average Englishman's general knowledge about these far-off regions of Asia.[451] It is possible that travellers and immigrants of the late fifteenth century, and after, had their tales to tell about the famous Great Emir and the context in which he had lived. Perhaps the sum of these tales constituted a sizeable pool of information of questionable accuracy, it is true, but, nevertheless, possibly highly colourful and of a nature which would contribute its large share of impetus to keep the topic

---

448. See ibid.

449. See above, pp. 96 ff.

450. See above, p. 99 . See below, pp. 128-129 and p. 129, n. 454.

451. See Ellis-Fermor, ed. cit., n. 4, p. 22.

alive in the imagination of the people. Should Marlowe not have met such story-tellers on English soil, there is the possibility that he might have in foreign countries. Marlowe's itineraries as a spying agent still remain a mystery. It is said that Walsingham kept spies as far distant as the Turkish court.[452] Many are the ways by which Marlowe could have obtained details about his hero.

There is plenty of evidence to show that the interest in Tamerlane in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was keen and alive. Many chroniclers, translators, and commentators deplore the lack of adequate written information about Tamerlane of whom they have heard so much. Some admit to having taken great pains to find information about him before they discovered accounts which they translated or reproduced.[453] By the end of the sixteenth century, the image of Tamerlane had been so em-

---

452. See Wraight and Stern, op. cit., n. 11, p. 86.

453. Regrets of finding so little information about Tamerlane are repeatedly expressed: see Bizarus, op. cit., n. 322, p. 243; Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 248. Fortescue deplores this silence about the exploits of this great hero of the modern age. He says:

> There hath been amonge the Grekes, Romaines. ..., right valiaunt, and fortunate in war: so were they no lesse fortunate, in that some others by writynge commended their chiualrie to the posteritie for euer. But in our tyme we haue had one, in no respect inferiour to any of the others, in this one pointe notwithstandyng lesse happie, that no man hath vouchsaued, by hys penne in any sorte to commende him, to the posteritie following. So that I, who moste desired some thynge to speake of hym, have been forced to gether here, and there little peeces, and pamphlets, scarce lendyng you any shewe of his conquirous exploytes, the same also confusely, and with out any order.

See op. cit., n. 317, fol. 82 v. Further on he adds,

> Is it to be supposed, that this historie of Tamburlaine. had it of anie been written, woulde haue been a matter worthie both of penne and paper: for that greate exploytes, no doubte were happily atchiued of hym: but as for me I neuer founde more, then I here presently haue writen, neither suppose I that any other thinge, in of anye other man writen, this onely excepted, where on all men accorde, that he neuer sawe the backe, or frounyng face of fortune:

see ibid., fol. 87 v. Shute in his translation of Cambinus, echoes similar comments. He says:

> And yf it had happened, that Tamerlane had had with him some man of excellent learning and wysedome, who mought with his

cont'd./

bellished that he was presented to the Europeans as a model of courage and devotion to a patriotic cause and an example of heroic virtues and values worthy of imitation by the Christians of the Western countries.[454]

Footnote No. 453 cont'd./

> wrytings haue celebrated the great enterprises that he dyd, their [sic] is no doute but that he mought haue been numbred amonge the cheife and princypall captaynes, eyther of the olde worlde orels of this present age, but god gyueth not all things to one man, ...:

op. cit., n. 297, fol. 5-6. Whetstones has similar comments to make: "Such was the iniurye of his fortune as no worthye writers undertooke his historye at large: ...": op. cit., n. 319, p. 179. Or again, "It is pittie his pollicies and battayles be not largely written, which in these conquestes could not but be famous": ibid.. p. 80. See also, p. 82. Vattier deplores the lack of a historian for Tamerlane's career: see op. cit., n. 84, sig. e i v. See also above, p. 125, and n. 443.

454. Pétis speaks of the value of knowing about Tamerlane and his career as a source of examples of virtues worthy of being imitated: see op. cit., n. 80, vol. 1, Preface to the reader, fol. e vi v ff. In his dedicatory word, Vattier compares Tamerlane to the king of France and Mazarin, the latter being even greater than Tamerlane. In his preface, he warns them that the name of Tamerlane must not cause one to imagine he was a brutal and primitive illiterate barbarian, as do some writers, but that he was "vn homme prudent, sçauant, éloquent, vaillant Guerrier et sage Politique, dont la vie et les aduantures sont admirables ...": see op. cit., n. 84, Preface, fol. e i v. Jean du Bec's translation of the life of Tamerlane (see above, p. 90, n. 276) was approved by Charles de Baiiac, canon and great archdeacon of the church Notre Dame de Rouen. This canon considered the book apt to stimulate more and more the nobility and the citizens of France to assist the king in the defence of the French state and crown: see op. cit., n. 276, "Approbation". Jean du Bec himself dedicates his book to the king. He judges the career of Tamerlane, Emperor of the Parthians, worthy of being brought to the knowledge of the French nobility "pour fauoriser leurs courages à rechercher de l'honneur et de la gloire en vous faisant seruice, ..., et exposer liberallement leurs vies pour mettre à fin vos grands et genereux dessains ...": see ibid.. "Dedicace au roi". In his epistle to the reader, Du Bec mentions that many serious and worthy authors have written about Tamerlane in their works on things of the world in general: see ibid.. "Epistre av Lecteur". By the end of the sixteenth century and later, Tamerlane has become a norm by which to judge the worth of statesmen, a norm with which the general public seems to have been well acquainted. On the other hand, Du Bec speaks of Tamerlane's story as having been "long temps enseuelie": see ibid.

Undoubtedly, while this transformation of Tamerlane's image had required time to develop, it proved that the subject of Tamerlane's career was still a topic of interest to many.[455]

One can only speculate about the role, the extent and the importance of a Tamerlane-lore at the time of Marlowe. However, there is one account which seems to illustrate and validate its existence and importance. It has been pointed out that Marlowe might be indebted to Knolles for the material used in his play. Marlowe's Tamburlaine recalls Knolles's Tamerlane in many ways and there is plenty of internal evidence to support this theory.[456] However, difficulties arise in connection with Marlowe's indebtedness to Knolles for his characterization of Tamburlaine. In keeping with his method of writing in layers,[457] Knolles has incorporated in his section on Tamerlane, material drawn from the translation of an account published by a certain Jean du Bec, abbé de Mortemer in 1595,[458] some seven or eight years after Marlowe wrote his play. Strange as it may seem, several ideas not present in the European accounts, but developed by Du Bec, find their way in Marlowe's play. Du Bec has long since been discredited as a reliable

---

455. Hayton makes this comment about historians and chroniclers with regards to Tamburlaine: "Quasi toutes les hystoires qui sont escriptes depuys son temps parlent de luy": op. cit., n. 91, fol. lx, col. a - col. b. Vattier admits that he was curious to know "ce que c'estoit que de ce Tamerlan, dont j'avois oüy parler si auantageusement en gros": see op. cit., n. 84, Preface, sig. i ii.

456. See below, App. A and B.

457. See above, pp. 88-89.

458. See op. cit., n. 276. This work was translated into English and published under the title The Historie of the Great Emperovr Tamerlan. Wherein are expressed, encounters, skirmishes, battels, sieges, assaults, skalings, takings of cities and strong places, defended, and assaulted ... Drawen from the auncient Monuments of the Arabians. by Mensire Iean du Bec, Abbot of Mortimer. Newly translated out of French into English for their benefite which are ignorant in that language by H.M. (London, 1597).

source of information[459] but should he be equally so as a vehicle of the Tamerlane-lore which might have existed at the time?

In the preface to his account, Du Bec affirms that the idea that Tamerlane lacked historians is erroneous. Tamerlane's name is, according to him, very famous among the Arabs and the Turks and his exploits have been extensively described.[460] Du Bec claims that in one of his voyages to the East, he came across one of these histories written by a certain Alhacen, an Arab and companion of Tamerlane, who was familiar with Tamerlane's campaigns and who was commissioned by him to put them in writing.[461] Du Bec explains his difficulty in using an interpreter who spoke only "Frank". Du Bec affirms that, nevertheless, he was constantly concerned about writing the truth.[462] The authenticity of Du Bec's work raises many questions. Firstly, Marlovian scholars have failed to trace this Alhacen. Secondly, the labour of translating a history written in Arabic is a problematic venture in the best of circumstances, as several translators affirm. Difficulties increase if the "Frank" of Du Bec's interpreter corresponds to the definition of "a mixture of Italian, Slavonic, Greek, and Spanish"[463] as he says it does. One readily perceives the possibility for an extremely wide margin of error and many questions come to mind about Du Bec and his book which he describes as drawn from the "monumens antiques des Arabes".[464]

However, Knolles, who claims he is ever concerned about getting to

---

459. See Ellis-Fermor, ed. cit., n. 4, p. 17, n. 2; p. 24, n. 3 and p. 34. Lamb qualifies Du Bec's work as a "mythical account of an unknown Alhazen": see op. cit., n. 73, p. 258.

460. See Du Bec, op. cit., n. 276, p. 1.

461. See ibid., p. 2.

462. See ibid., p. 2-3.

463. See ibid., p. 3.

464. See ibid., title page. Ellis-Fermor remarks that "which Arabs or what ancient records it remains impossible to say": see op. cit., n. 4, p. 34.

the heart of the matter in Turkish affairs[465] and is widely experienced in dealing with information on this subject,[466] nevertheless, considers Du Bec's book as a worthy source for his section on Tamerlane. Du Bec lays strong emphasis on the religious aspects of Tamerlane and yet, curiously enough, Knolles is not put off by this. Was the "good Richard Knolles"[467] particularly receptive to material of this kind or did this material simply fit into the patterns of the Tamerlane-lore of his and Marlowe's time? What use did Knolles make of Du Bec and how may one account for the presence of some of Du Bec's ideas in Marlowe's play?

Du Bec offers an element of truth in his book when he discredits the legends about Tamerlane's sieges carried out with the use of white, red, and black tents as well as the legendary use of Bajazet as a footstool. According to him, these are simply fables.[468] However, Du Bec emphasizes the religious character of Tamerlane, Even Tamerlane's name acquires the fanciful meaning of "celestial grace",[469] a meaning which underscores his divinely-assigned mission. Associations between Tamerlane and Biblical figures which do not exist in the European accounts of the Piccolomini tradition reappear in Du Bec. Tamerlane's unusual strength is accountable to the fact that he is a descendant of Samson on his mother's side![470] Tamerlane, like Timur, admires and prays for the wisdom of Solomon.[471] Legends which show Christian connections with Tamerlane abound. Tamerlane has a deep respect for Christ,[472] hates the Jews for having put him to

---

465. Knolles's methods of work are a witness to that attitude: see above, p. 88.

466. Knolles's list of authors used testifies to his wide reading on the subject: see above, p. 88, n. 270.

467. Lamb, op. cit., n. 73, p. 258.

468. See Du Bec, op. cit., n. 276, pp. 5 ff.

469. See ibid., p. 10.

470. See Du Bec, op. cit., n. 276, pp. 12-13; Knolles, op. cit., n. 258, p. 235.

471. See Du Bec, op. cit., n. 276, pp. 39-40.

472. See Du Bec, op. cit., n. 276, pp. 334-335, Knolles, op. cit., n. 258 pp. 223-224.

death,[473] visits the Holy Sepulchre several times as well as the city of Jerusalem,[474] and acts on the counsel of a Christian knight and friend or relative of the emperor of Constantinople[475] when he attacks Bajazet. Knolles agrees with Du Bec when he judges Tamerlane to be unique: "There be ... but few Tamerlanes in the world".[476]

Knolles and Marlowe both accept Du Bec's definition of Tamerlane's mission to be the power sent by God to abase the proud,[477] a fitting function for a scourge. According to Marlowe, Tamburlaine's main role is to scourge the pride of Bajazet, of "those proud Egyptians" (1T 5.1.121) and of the Turks (2T 4.1.76-77, 148-149). Du Bec, Knolles, and Marlowe present the hero as a monotheist (2T 5.1.201), intolerant towards idolatry of any sort and a destroyer of idols (2T 5.1.172 ff.).[478] According to Du Bec and Knolles, the hero has special regard for Christians[479] while in Marlowe's play he is sent especially to save them (1T 3.3.46-60). All three note the extraordinary power of his eyes. Knolles says this on the subject:

> In his eies sat such a rare maiestie, as a man could hardly endure to behold them without closing his owne: and many in talking with him, and often beholding of him became dumbe, which caused him oftentimes with a comely modestie to abstain from looking too earnestly vpon such as spake vnto him, or discoursed with him.[480]

---

473. See Knolles, op. cit., n. 258, p. 224.

474. See ibid., pp. 223-224.

475. See Du Bec, op. cit., n. 276, pp. 40-41, 196 and 398-399. According to Knolles, Axalla, Tamerlane's adviser, was a Genoese, a friend of the Greek emperor: see op. cit., n. 258, p. 211.

476. Knolles, op. cit., n. 258, p. 222. See also Du Bec, op. cit., n. 276, p. 257.

477. See Du Bec, op. cit., n. 276, pp. 5, 199, 201, and 230; Knolles, op. cit., n. 258, pp. 217 and 221.

478. See Du Bec, op. cit., n. 276, pp. 40 and 189; Knolles, op. cit., n. 258, p. 211; see below, pp. 316 ff. and notes.

479. See Du Bec, op. cit., n. 276, p. 214; Knolles, op. cit., n. 258, p. 213.

480. Knolles, op. cit., n. 258, p. 235. Du Bec speaks of a divine majesty emanating from Tamerlane's eyes: see op. cit., n. 276, pp. 11-12.

Is it by sheer coincidence that Marlowe puts the following words on Theridamas's lips in the course of the latter's first encounter with Tamburlaine: "His looks do menace heaven and dare the Gods, / His fierie eies are fixt upon the earth" (1T 1.2.157-159), even though Tamburlaine might be absorbed with the military business of devising some new stratagem (1T 1.2.159)? Du Bec and Knolles note that Tamerlane was very kind to the submissive but cruel to those who resisted his will.[481] Marlowe does not create any dramatic situation in which Tamburlaine's kindness towards the submissive may be displayed unless exception be made for Zenocrate. If Tamburlaine is relentless in his decision to kill the submissive Virgins of Damascus (1T 5.1.110 ff.), it must be remembered that the Virgins are paying the price of their lives as ambassadors for the Damascenes who admit they have resisted with stubbornness to Tamburlaine's wishes (1T 5.1.3). Tamerlane, in Du Bec and in Knolles, refuses to kill Bajazet who repeatedly begs him for death.[482] Marlowe's Bajazet would rather die than to be subjected to the humiliations Tamburlaine metes out to him (1T 4.2.16-18). Marlowe's Tamburlaine follows the same order for his major campaigns as does the Tamerlane of Du Bec and of Knolles. The hero defeats Bajazet, the Soldan of Egypt, Damascus and, finally, Babylon.[483]

Strangely enough, Marlowe introduces in his play some details of varying relevance which are found in Du Bec but which do not appear in Knolles. Tamerlane is compared to the sun among the stars by Du Bec;[484] so is Tamburlaine by Marlowe (1T 4.2.36-40). Of the three European accounts discussed above, Perondinus is the only one who mentions Tamerlane's wife. Tamerlane is said to have married the daughter of a king.[485] Du Bec's

---

481. See Du Bec, op. cit., n. 276, p. 165; Knolles, op. cit., n. 258, p. 215.

482. See Du Bec, op. cit., n. 276, p. 248; Knolles, op. cit., n. 258, p. 220.

483. See Du Bec, op. cit., n. 276, pp. 261 and 348; Knolles, op. cit., n. 258, pp. 223 and 227.

484. See Du Bec, op. cit., n. 458, sig. A2 v and p. 40.

485. See Perondinus, op. cit., n. 315, p. 247 (misnumbered as 245).

Tamerlane also marries into royalty but several details are added which Marlowe has incorporated in his play. Marlowe's Tamburlaine marries an Egyptian princess instead of the daughter of the Cham as Du Bec's Tamerlane does. However, Du Bec's Tamerlane insists on being crowned before marrying his princess as he does not wish anyone to deduce that he has acceded to the throne through wedlock.[486] Marlowe's Tamburlaine marries Zenocrate only after he has won the Persian and the Egyptian Crowns (1T 5.1.534). Du Bec's Tamerlane is kind to his father-in-law[487] and clement to the Soldan.[488] In Marlowe's play, both of these attitudes are combined in Tamburlaine's manner of dealing with his father-in-law, the Soldan (1T 5.1.433-436, 446-449). Du Bec's Tamerlane and Marlowe's Tamburlaine both show great respect for their queen.[489]

Du Bec's Tamerlane is literally a god revered by his soldiers;[490] Marlowe's Tamburlaine is referred to as an earthly god in the play (2T 1.3.138; 3.5.22). While the soul of Du Bec's Tamerlane is part and parcel of God,[491] Marlowe's Tamburlaine poses as the image and figure of God (2T 4.3.25-27; 4.1.157-158, 5.3.38). As a warrior, Du Bec's Tamerlane is compared to the lion and the fox;[492] so is Marlowe's Tamburlaine compared to a preying fox (1T 1.1.31) and to "princely lions (1T 1.2.52-54). Gold silver, diamonds, rubies, pearls and jewels, all are used to deck armies in Du Bec's account[493] and to some extent those in Marlowe's Tamburlaine

---

486. See Du Bec, op. cit., n. 276, p. 33.

487. See ibid., pp. 193 ff.

488. See ibid., p. 308.

489. See ibid., p. 396. Du Bec's Tamerlane is kind to his queen and shares with her some of his authority as a way of showing consideration for her father. Tamburlaine's crowning of Zenocrate before her father is perhaps meant to convey a similar feeling.

490. See ibid., p. 307.

491. See ibid., p. 329.

492. See ibid., p. 234.

493. See ibid., p. 139.

(1T 1.1.143-145; 1.2.124-126).

Du Bec describes the rigorous training Tamerlane inflicts upon his sons in terms of exposure to cold, heat, and hunger:[494] Marlowe's Tamburlaine subjects his sons to a similar programme of training (2T 3.2.55-58). Du Bec's Tamerlane regrets finding one of his sons to be so effeminate and delicate in stamina; he is hardly suitable to be his successor.[495] Marlowe's Tamburlaine complains about the same shortcomings in his sons (2T 1.3.21-32) and painfully discovers that his eldest is no more of a soldier than he appears to be (2T 4.1.60 ff. and 91 ff.).

After his campaigns, Du Bec's hero quickly retires to Samarqand;[496] Marlowe's Tamburlaine plans to do the same (2T 4.3.107 ff.). Du Bec's and Marlowe's heroes end their careers in similar circumstances. Du Bec's Tamerlane is suddenly taken ill; he realizes he is but a mortal, that he must follow the law of nature, and pay his tribute.[497] Marlowe's Tamburlaine follows a similar psychological itinerary. When he is suddenly taken ill (2T 5.1.217), he has to admit to being but a man (2T 5.3.44). That he must follow the way of nature is implied in his last words full of resignation: "the Scourge of God must die" (2T 5.3.248). Du Bec's hero dies after two victories over the Turks of Natolia, the last victory being over Callapine;[498] so does Marlowe's (2T 5.3.102-104, 115). Both console themselves with the thought that they will live on immortally in their sons (2T 5.3.173-174).[499]

There are too many similarities between Du Bec's Tamerlane and Marlowe's Tamburlaine to allow one to dismiss them lightly. Yet, the

---

494. See ibid., p. 430.

495. See ibid., pp. 430-431.

496. See ibid., p. 328.

497. See ibid., p. 476.

498. See ibid., p. 505.

499. See ibid., p. 508.

fact remains that Marlowe could not have had access to Du Bec's book. The most probable explanation that one can offer is that the details which are found in both works were possibly part of a lore which Du Bec incorporated in his account and Marlowe in his play. One point which deserves to be noted especially for the purposes of this study is that the hero of this lore appears and was accepted as a markedly religious figure. If this lore was rife at the time when Marlowe wrote his play, then we have an additional reason for the success of Tamburlaine. Marlowe was presenting in a highly poetic and dramatic form material which was already familiar to the Elizabethans. It must be noted that the religious dimension of Tamburlaine was possibly uppermost in the Elizabethan's understanding of the Marlovian hero.

Thus it has been shown in this chapter that the interest of the Elizabethan in the Moslem world could account in some measure for the popularity of Marlowe's play. It has also been pointed out that religious antagonism was an intimate component of the Elizabethan's concept of the Moslem world. The feelings of fear and suspicion of the Christians before Islam were basically rooted in the threat that the Moslem faith represented to the Europeans. A comparison between the historical Timur and the hero of the Tamerlane-myth, however summarily it may have been made, has shown that Christian habits of thought seem to be largely responsible for the transformation of the facts about Timur into the legends about Tamerlane. It has been pointed out that, while the religious dimensions are important aspects to keep in mind in the understanding of both Timur and Tamerlane, nevertheless, the religious connotations attached to the chroniclers' hero are quite different from those used to explain the historical Timur. For all these reasons, one may suppose that the religious image of Tamerlane may have been an important factor in the Elizabethan's appreciation of the Scythian hero and that, consequently, Marlowe

fact remains that Marlowe could not have had access to Du Bec's book. The most probable explanation that one can offer is that the details which are found in both works were possibly part of a lore which Du Bec incorporated in his account and Marlowe in his play. One point which deserves to be noted especially for the purposes of this study is that the hero of this lore appears and was accepted as a markedly religious figure. If this lore was rife at the time when Marlowe wrote his play, then we have an additional reason for the success of Tamburlaine. Marlowe was presenting in a highly poetic and dramatic form material which was already familiar to the Elizabethans. It must be noted that the religious dimension of Tamburlaine was possibly uppermost in the Elizabethan's understanding of the Marlovian hero.

Thus it has been shown in this chapter that the interest of the Elizabethan in the Moslem world could account in some measure for the popularity of Marlowe's play. It has also been pointed out that religious antagonism was an intimate component of the Elizabethan's concept of the Moslem world. The feelings of fear and suspicion of the Christians before Islam were basically rooted in the threat that the Moslem faith represented to the Europeans. A comparison between the historical Timur and the hero of the Tamerlane-myth, however summarily it may have been made, has shown that Christian habits of thought seem to be largely responsible for the transformation of the facts about Timur into the legends about Tamerlane. It has been pointed out that, while the religious dimensions are important aspects to keep in mind in the understanding of both Timur and Tamerlane, nevertheless, the religious connotations attached to the chroniclers' hero are quite different from those used to explain the historical Timur. For all these reasons, one may suppose that the religious image of Tamerlane may have been an important factor in the Elizabethan's appreciation of the Scythian hero and that, consequently, Marlowe

would have kept this factor in mind when he wrote his play. Popular knowledge about Tamerlane, including his religious dimension, may have been responsible for the Elizabethan's apparently ready understanding of Tamburlaine and for his enthusiastic reception of the play. There remains to analyse the presence and the significance of the religious elements in Marlowe's play, those of the Moslem world in which Tamburlaine lived and fought being the first to be examined.

Chapter 2

MOSLEM ELEMENTS IN 'TAMBURLAINE THE GREAT'

Several problems faced Marlowe when he set about writing Tamburlaine the Great. Most of the material present in the sources was ill-suited to the Elizabethan stage: large-scale military campaigns and their aftermath of destruction hardly constitute choice dramatic material for any stage. As was mentioned before, Tamerlane was still considered a great historical hero,[1] but the accounts of his career were largely made up of legends and fiction. Moreover, the Tamerlane-saga had transformed the historical character of Timur into some kind of archetypal military leader and semi-deity[2] devoid of traits which spell out the individuality of a person. Marlowe's task was to reincarnate the person of Tamerlane, a great and powerful one at that, if he wished to construct a play of power which his Tamburlaine proved to be.

Secondly, as has been mentioned before, the historical Timur had been of the Moslem world,[3] a subject fascinating to the curious,[4] but repulsive to most Christians.[5] However, Tamerlane's victory over Bajazet, the arch-enemy of European Christendom,[6] had made of Tamerlane some kind of Christian warrior,[7] shorn of any Islamic connotations.[8] And yet, according to Chew, Marlowe's dramatization of Tamerlane's career stood out as the most famous of the English plays upon Oriental themes and Tamburlaine himself figured as the greatest of all

---

1. See above, pp. 46, 77, 110 and n. 365, 111 ff.
2. See above, pp. 98, 117, 118 and n. 410, p. 124.
3. See above, pp. 60 ff., p. 64 and n. 130, p. 65 and n. 137, p. 71.
4. See above, pp. 38 ff.
5. See above, p. 41 and n. 35.
6. For an account of the incident based on historical research, see above, pp. 72 ff. For an account of the incident as it emerges from the works Marlowe possibly used, see above pp. 110 ff.
7. See above, p. 110.
8. See above, p. 120.

the Moslem stage heroes.[9] Obviously, Marlowe had to reintroduce into the story of this hero of Islam a sufficient number of Moslem elements to make his character compatible with the setting which had watched him rise to power and conquer the world. What were these elements and what knowledge of Islam did they suppose? What was their contribution to the play as a whole? How did Marlowe reconcile the Moslem ethos which these elements evoked in the play with the Christian frame of reference by which the Elizabethan audiences would judge his hero?[10]

Because this study is centred on the religious elements in Tamburlaine and because the play is set in a Moslem context, special attention should be given to the religious elements borrowed from Islam which Marlowe chose to incorporate in his play. Obviously, allusions to Mahomet and to all that he represents are meaningful only to the extent that the audience is familiar with Islam and its founder, either with the historical facts or with these facts transformed by the lore they inspired. In general, because audiences in our modern, and even more so in our Western world, would tend to have a limited knowledge of Mahomet, of the doctrine and of the practices of Islam, many inferences in the play might be lost to them. One must remember, however, that the Elizabethans were probably quite familiar with several aspects of the Moslem world. By the end of the sixteenth century, the Islamic faith already had a thousand years of history behind it. By this time, Islam had reached the peak of its political power and was even on its decline with respect to European affairs. Islam's millenium had provided plenty of time to allow its adherents to record the core of truth central to the life of its founder, to invent legends to fill in the gaps in Mohammed's career,[11] and to consolidate the

---

9. See Samuel C. Chew, The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance (New York, 1937), p. vii. See also above, p. 50.

10. On the psychological value of the plays on Moslem themes for the Elizabethans, see Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 99. See also above, p. 47.

11. Throughout the centuries, the founder of Islam has been known by various names. The Arabic form of his name is "Muhammad" while "Mohammed" is the accepted literary form. The most currently used form in the writings

(continued overleaf....)

body of doctrine which the founder had bequeathed to his followers. Some knowledge about each of these aspects had already made its way into Europe and England. The four subsequent centuries were to bring about little changes of any major significance in these areas and, consequently, the results of modern scholarship have hardly altered the basic notions about Islam. By its nature, the rigidity of the Koranic rule allowed little scope for changes of any importance. Thus Islam, as it existed in the 1590's, already had had a long history and was to continue along its same patterns of existence for many years to come. There are many reasons to believe that the Elizabethans and, therefore, Marlowe were familiar with these basics.

Knowledge about Islam could have reached the Elizabethans in various ways. Treatises about Turkish affairs often had their chapters on Mahomet and his religion.[12] Prisoners, like Johann Schiltberger,[13] had communicated their first-hand observations about the practice of this faith and the applications

---

11. Continued..... which Marlowe possibly consulted was "Mahomet" from the Latin "Machometus" or "Mahometus". The corrupted forms of his name, that is, "Maumet", "Mahumet" or "Mahound" gradually became equated with "idol" from "the mediaeval notion that Mohammed was worshipped as a god": see OED, articles "Mahomet" and "Maumet". Henceforth, unless specified otherwise, the form "Mohammed" will generally be used to denote the historical figure, while the form "Mahomet" will denote the character described in medieval or Renaissance writings. For Mahomet as a god, see below, pp. 302 ff.

12. The following works offer information on Mahomet, or on his doctrine, or on both: Laonicus Chalcondylas, De origine et rebvs gestis Tvrcorvm libri Decem ... (Basileae, 1556), pp. 38-40; Ioannis Zonara, Compendium Historiarum, in tres Tomos distinctum (Basileae, 1557), Tomvs III, pp. 70-71; Thomas Fortescue, The Foreste or Collection of Histories (London, 1571), fol. 28; Bernard de Girard, L'Histoire de France (Paris, 1576), pp. 88, 91 and 94; Philippus Lonicerus, Chronicorvm Tvrcicorvm. In quibus Tvrcorvm Origo. Principes. Imperatores ..., Et Mahometicae religionis Instituta ... (Francoforti ad Moenvm, 1578), Tomvs I, fol. 2 ff. and fol. 43-72 v; Blaise de Vigenere, L'Histoire de la Decadence de l'Empire Grec, et establissement de celvy des Turcs ... (Paris, 1584), pp. 160-167; George Whetstones, The English Mvrror ... (London, 1586), pp. 55-60. Richard Knolles lists a Turkish Alcoran among his source materials: see The Generall Historie of the Turkes ... (London, 1603), Indvction to the Christian Reader (unpaginated). See also above, p. 88, n. 270. Other works could be listed.

13. J. Buchan Telfer, trans. and ed., The Bondage and Travels of Johann Schiltberger, a native of Bavaria, in Europe, Asia, and Africa, 1396-1427 (London, don, 1879). This account had been published at Frankfurt in 1494 and possibly as early as 1475. For a history of the printed editions of this account, see ibid., pp. x - xiv.

of its rules in real life. So had travellers[14] of the sixteenth century or before. Facts about Islam and Mohammed had been circulating in Europe and England long before the days of Marlowe. As was mentioned before, one must not minimize the opportunities the Elizabethans had of keeping up with some of the developments involving the Moslem world. What has been said about the possibilities of hearing about Timur or Tamerlane applies to Islam and its founder.[15] The Elizabethans lived in an age when wars[16] and disabled veterans from the Turkish battle scenes[17] and concern about ransoming prisoners in the Islamic countries[18] often held their attention. Travellers to and from the Moslem territories seemed to have been numerous enough to provide a sizeable and steady flow of information about Islamic topics.[19] Some travellers, like English traders and diplomats, already sensed that certain sects of Islam provided more grounds for a sympathetic understanding than others.[20] Moreover, centuries of military and political involvement with Islam made up a large part of the history of Eastern European countries and of those surrounding the Mediterranean Sea like Spain, Italy, and northern Africa. Episodes of these histories were transferred in writing or orally to the rest of Europe. Incidents of all sorts: political, diplomatic, commercial, and religious, kept the Europeans and the Elizabethans acutely aware at all times of the presence of Islam in Europe.

Thus, channels facilitating the infiltration of facts about Islam were numerous; so were they for the transfer of legends either by the Moslems or by

---

14. See above, pp. 38-39.

15. See ibid.

16. See above, p. 40.

17. See above, p. 41 and n. 35.

18. See above, p. 41 and notes 36 and 37.

19. One such traveller, who wrote an account of his observations, was Nicholas Nicholay in The Nauigations, peregrinations and voyages, made into Turkie ... Translated out of the French by T. Washington the younger (London, 1585). See below, pp. 273-274.

20. See above, p. 43 and n. 46.

intermediaries between Islam and Europe or England. Details about Mohammed and his religion, which have since been confirmed by modern research, were already known in the sixteenth century. So were many of the legends. It is possible that this knowledge about and sensitivity to the Moslem world opened up to the Elizabethan areas of meaning in the play which we have yet to detect. Sustained themes, metaphors, and parallels, which escape our attention, may have been obvious to Marlowe's audiences and may have added dimensions to their understanding of the play which have yet to be explored. In the light of these remarks, one queries as to what these Moslem elements and allusions were and what they might have meant to an Elizabethan audience.

Therefore, the first purpose of this chapter is to familiarize the reader with some of the main aspects of Islam. For the sake of clarity, Islam will be examined in terms of its three components, a section being devoted to each, that is, to Mahomet its founder, to the Koran, and to the body of traditions which developed within the practice of this faith. It is hoped that these elements will shed light on the Moslem dimension of Tamburlaine and of his stage colleagues, friend and foe. It is also hoped that the understanding of the stage characters in this light may offer some unifying elements to the action of the play. Unfortunately, not all the Moslem elements in the play can be examined in this chapter. Those which are relevant to specific themes will be dealt with in the analysis of those themes later in this study. In the meanwhile, in the first section will be examined the contemporary image of Mahomet and the presence and the significance of Mahomet in the play in the light of that image.

I

Mahomet plays neither an active nor a visible part in Tamburlaine, Parts I and II, but neither is he altogether absent from the play. His name occurs no fewer than eleven times in Tamburlaine, Part I, as many as twenty-five times in Tamburlaine, Part II, altogether making some thirty-six references to the founder of Islam in the entire play. One must admit that the appearance of Mahomet's name does not always necessarily add much to the meaning of the play as a whole. In a few instances, it is used simply in conjurations which could occur quite naturally on the lips of Moslem characters.[21] In some of these instances, the recurrence of Mahomet's name possibly helped to create and preserve a proper exotic atmosphere for a play set in a Moslem context. In other instances, however, the references made to Mahomet can become quite significant, depending on the circumstances in which they occur and by whom they are made: as may be expected, the figure of Mahomet can hold different meanings for different characters in the play. Apart from the direct references made to Mahomet, there do occur allusions either to his doctrine or to legends which have become attached to his name. Altogether these references and allusions form a respectable body of material deserving a careful examination on its own right.

The place of Mahomet is central to Islam. During his lifetime, Mahomet the man founded the Moslem faith; as a posthumously idealized identity, he became the soul and spirit of Islam. Both phases of Mahomet's presence must be taken into account if one wishes to understand his place and importance in Islam in general, and possibly in Marlowe's play as well.

---

21. This would seem to apply to the use of the name of Mahomet in the following instances in Tamburlaine, Part I: 1T. 3.3.76; and to the following in Tamburlaine, Part II: 2T. 1.1.137; 1.2.65; 1.3.109; 2.2.32; 3.1.3; 3.5.17, 92; 4.1.121.

Several parallels may be drawn between Mahomet and Tamburlaine. In the first part of this study of Mahomet, attention will be drawn to the similarities in the careers and the moral traits which emerge from the comparison of the two characters. Purely fanciful legends have become attached to Mahomet's name; the ones which Marlowe has included in his play will be noted. The dramatic significance of the above points, which Mahomet's name probably evoked to the Elizabethan spectator, will be assessed. In a second part of the study of Mahomet, attention will be given to the development and the traits of the exalted image of the immortal founder of Islam and to their contribution towards a better understanding of Tamburlaine as Marlowe created him.

Even to this day, the biography of Mahomet, or Mohammed, is little more than a vast accumulation of stories and legends which his followers collected throughout the first centuries after his death. Indeed, the core of authentic truth in his biography is very small and offers little interest.[22] The earliest sources are dated as late as 125 years[23] after Mohammed's death, a period long enough to allow the devotion of his followers[24] or the needs of various factions,[25] the time to invent and accumulate a collection of material

---

22. "A biography of Mohammed limited only to absolutely unquestioned facts could amount to no more than a few dry pages": Maxime Rodinson, Mohammed, translated from the French edition Mahomet (1961) by Anne Carter (Penguin Books, 1976 reprinted ed.), p. x. See also T.W. Arnold, The Islamic Faith (London, 1928), p. 7; Alfred Guillaume, Islam (Penguin Books, 1977 reprinted ed.), p. 20.

23. See Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. xi.

24. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson explains the glorification of Mohammed as "the triumph of religious feeling over historical fact": Studies in Islamic Mysticism (Cambridge, 1921), p. 88.

25. "A great deal was forged, or at least re-written to suit the interests of a particular party, cause, family, or theory": Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. xi. See also Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 20.

hopelessly complex and largely fictitious. Nevertheless, to the Moslem, as well as to the sixteenth-century chronicler, Mohammed unquestionably ranked among the great historical figures of the world who had shaped, for better or for worse, the destinies of numerous nations.[26] By 1600 Mohammed's religion had already moulded the mind and the way of life of many peoples. Mohammed had managed to interrelate religion with politics to the extent that a powerful theocratic form of government had developed into a pattern surviving to this day.[27] The impact of Mohammed's "religious genius"[28] and political thinking[29] on the world scene forced some historians to recognize in him a "historical force",[30] both a source and a product of his own ideology. If one discards, for the time being, the abundant amount of reviling directed against Mahomet by medieval and Renaissance chroniclers[31]

---

26. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 53. See also W. Montgomery Watt, The Majesty That Was Islam: The Islamic World, 661-1100. "Great Civilization Series" (London, 1976 reprinted ed.), p. 1.

27. Rodinson defines the state of Medina under Mohammed as follows:

> It was a theocratic state, that is to say the supreme power belonged to Allah himself. Allah made his will known through Muhammad and through him alone. If we consider that the Voice of Allah was in fact the voice of Muhammad's unconscious, the inference is that what we have here is, in principle, an absolute monarchy.

See op. cit., n. 22, p. 220. For the theocratic state explained as an ideological system, see ibid., p. 247. Duncan Black Macdonald says the following about the government in Islam: "In Muslim countries, Church and State are one indissolubly, and until the very essence of Islam passes away, that unity cannot be relaxed. The law of the land, too, is, in theory, the law of the Church": Development of Muslim Theology Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory (London, 1903), p. 4. He adds that in Islam, because of the intimate relationship which exists between the Church and the State, one must be a great lawyer, a great theologian, a great statesman if he is to be anyone: see ibid. See also Arnold, op. cit., n.22, pp. 38-39; Watt, op. cit., n. 26, pp. 1-2.

28. Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. xvii.

29. See ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. See below, p. 173, n. 146; pp. 200 ff. and corresponding notes.

and, instead, focuses his attention on the factual content therein, surprisingly enough, the image emerging from these accounts is not far removed from that which modern studies have discovered. Thomas Newton's story of Mahomet appearing in his book published in 1575[32] illustrates these points.

According to Newton, as modern scholars will agree, and on the basis of Biblical authority,[33] Mahomet's ancestors were Arabians and, therefore, were descendants of Ismael, son of Abraham and Hagar,[34] and of Esau. Newton describes the Arabians as nomads living in tents and naturally given to theft and robbery.[35] He observes that those Arabians had many kinds of

---

32. Thomas Newton, A Notable Historie of the Saracens... (London, 1575), fol. 3 - 10v. Whetstones also has a brief biography of Mahomet: see op. cit., n. 12, pp. 56-60.

33. Modern Biblical scholarship considers the Israelites to be the descendants of Isaac while the Arabs are descendants of Ismael. Ismael was the son of Abraham by Hagar while Issac's mother was Sarah. See C.I. Scofield, ed., Holy Bible: Authorized King James Version (New York, 1967), p. 37, n. 4. See also Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 185.

34. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 2-2v. For Mahomet's Ismaelite ancestry, see also Whetstones, op. cit., n. 12, p. 56. For a similar view among modern scholars, see Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 185-186; Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 44 and 61. The belief was shared by all Islam: see Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p.233.

35. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 2v - 3. See also Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 4; Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 14. George Sale has this to say about the plundering carried on by the Arabs:

> The frequent robberies committed by these people on merchants and travellers have rendered the name of an Arab almost infamous in Europe; this they are sensible of, and endeavour to excuse themselves by alleging the hard usage of their father Ismail, who, being turned out of doors by Abraham, had the open plains and deserts given him by God for his patrimony, with permission to take whatever he could find there: and on this account they think they may, with a safe conscience, indemnify themselves as well as they can, not only on the posterity of Isaac, but also on everybody else, always supposing a sort of kindred between themselves and those they plunder.

See E.M. Wherry, A Comprehensive Commentary on the Qur'an: comprising Sale's translation and Preliminary Discourse with additional notes and emendations (London, 1882), vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 57. The Arabs consider the profession of plundering as honourable: see ibid., p. 58. On the character of the Arab's practice of the razzia, see

(continued overleaf....)

religion: some worshipped Christ, others observed the rites of Jews, still others indulged in nature worship and adored the sun, moon, stars, and serpents,[36] a fact to which modern scholars attest.[37] Mahomet was born of such people in a town near Mecca in 560 A.D., of the ancient line of Cora, son of Esau, by his father's side.[38] Because of the religious connotations implied, it is interesting to note that Newton describes Mahomet's father as an Ismaelite while his mother was a Jew.[39] Mahomet, therefore, was taught both the rites of the Hebrews and of the Gentiles, a fact which accounts for the mixture of doctrines which he later incorporated in Islam, much to the distaste of Christians. Both parents were poor and of humble condition. Like all prophets and in keeping with the way of life in these regions of Asia, he began as a shepherd. His background and the character of his early occupation are confirmed by modern scholars.[40] He was left an orphan early in life[41] and brought up by, as Newton qualifies him, an unscrupulous uncle, again described by Newton, as an Ismaelite.[42] As a youth, Mahomet was involved

---

35. Continued..... Watt, op. cit., n. 26, p. 32. Alfred Guillaume notes that making raids in the way of the Lord or in the cause of Islam was the road to Paradise: see The Traditions of Islam: An Introduction to the Study of the Hadith Literature (Oxford, 1924), p. 111.

36. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 3.

37. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 8. See also Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, vol. 1, p. 36.

38. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 3. Rodinson says that no one knows exactly when Mohammed was born. "The precise date, arrived at by means of some highly dubious calculations, varies between 567 and 573. The most accepted year is 571": see op. cit., n. 22, p. 38.

39. See Newton, op., cit., n. 32, fol. 3-3v. Whetstones says that Mahomet's father was a Gentile, neither Jew nor Christian: see op. cit., n. 12, p.56.

40. See Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 48.

41. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 3v. Whetstones says Mahomet was sold as a slave as a youth to a rich merchant: see op. cit., n. 12, p. 56. So does Newton: see op. cit., n.32, fol. 3v. Is this an example of the influence exercised by the Biblical story of Joseph on the biographical accounts of Mohammed of the kind which is so frequent in Islamic literature?

42. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 3v.

in traffic thus increased his familiarity with Hebrews, Christians, and Gentiles.[43] Newton's description of Mahomet as a man is flattering as are those of modern scholars.[44] He was of fair countenance, well-proportioned, very courteous, eloquent, and endowed with wit but, says Newton, he could be disposed to mischief as he was ambitious and haughty.[45] He "gaped"[46] after promotion and authority and aspired to become the sovereign of the empire and to unite the sects into one religion.[47] He married Khadija, a wealthy widow, former wife of his master, fifteen years his senior according to modern scholars,[48] and by whom he was, henceforth, freed from financial

---

43. See ibid. See also Whetstones op. cit., n.12, p. 57.

44. Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 49. On the greatness of Mohammed, see Muhammad Hamidullah, Le Prophète de l'Islam (Paris, 1959), pp. 9-11. Sale describes him as a man "pleasant and familiar in conversation," "a comely agreeable person" of "polite address," but with no education: see op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 73. Louis Gardet describes Mohammed as "la meilleure des créatures": see Dieu et la destinée de l'homme (Paris, 1967), p. 225. Guillaume does not paint so glorious a picture of Mohammed. He assesses him as a man of "loyalty and treachery, abstinence and debauchery, wisdom and ignorance, mediocrity and inspiration": see op. cit., n. 35, p. 135.

45. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol.3 v -4. Whetstones describes Mahomet as one who had a quick spirit, learned easily, was great in power and ability, had a subtle wit. He was proud and ambitious, forward and envious, delved in magic and negromancy: see op. cit., n. 12, pp. 56 and 57.

46. See Newton, op. cit., n.32, fol. 4.

47. See Newton, op. cit., n.32, fol. 4. Mohammed's idea of one God, one ruler, one religion prevailed throughout the centuries. Monotheism was thus made into a political issue. See also Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 67 and 119 ff; D.S. Margoliouth, Mohammed (London, 1939), p. 20. The cause of monotheism was uppermost in Mohammed's mind as it was to become in the faith of Islam. A believing Moslem had to be a monotheist at all cost. "The brotherhood of Islam took precedence of all other ties and relationships, so that a believing father might have to slay an unbelieving son": Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p.41. See also Duncan Black Macdonald, The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam (Chicago, 1912 reprinted ed.), p. 37; Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, p. 358, n. 191 and p. 359, n. 193.

48. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 27. See also Alfred Guillaume, trans. and ed., Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Isbaq's Sirat Rasul Allah (Lahore, 1967 reprinted ed.),p. 82; Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 49ff. Hamidullah has this to say in connection with this marriage. Marriages

(continued overleaf....)

worries.[49] He could now become totally dedicated to political and religious reforms.[50]

Modern scholars describe Mahomet's religious insights as psychic or mental experiences, or as religious states like trances or ecstatic seizures.[51] However, Mahomet's enemies qualified these experiences as epileptic fits,[52] or "the fallyng sickness"[53] according to Newton, both of which judgments are unsubstantiated according to modern research.[54] Newton says that Mahomet

---

48. Continued ..... between a victorious war leader and a princess or a lady of rank chosen among the vanquished was a custom which could be traced back to remote antiquity. In this way, the divisions between the two opposing camps were resolved and negotiations at the highest levels became possible: see op. cit., n. 44, p. 448. What about Tamburlaine's marrying Zenocrate, an Egyptian princess? Margoliouth notes that in the Islamic world, the husband must be (or become) at least equal in rank to the wife whereas the wife need not necessarily be so: see op. cit., n. 47, p. 62. Was Marlowe aware of these Oriental customs when he makes Tamburlaine decide to postpone his marriage with Zenocrate until he has acceded to greater honours?

49. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 4v - 5. See also Whetstones, op. cit., n. 12, p. 57; Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 50.

50. The beginning of Mohammed's concentrated efforts to reform and to conquer the neighbouring tribes seems to date from the time of his marriage with Khadija: see Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 58 ff.

51. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 56; Margoliouth, op. cit., n. 47, p. 19; Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, pp. 64 ff; Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 56, 74 and 203. Apparently, Mohammed was never sure whether his revelations were truly divine. His nightmare was that he was simply a poet possessed by a jinn, the equivalent of fauns, nymphs, satyrs to the heathen Arabs, or simple divinities to Islam, or that his experiences were diabolic in nature; see Macdonald, op. cit., n. 47, pp. 17-18, 20. Elsewhere, Macdonald suggests trances to be the result of a pathological condition: see ibid., p. 46.

52. See Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 56; Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 25.

53. Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 4v.

54. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 25, 26 and 56. Rodinson analyses Mohammed's mental and religious experiences as the product of a psycho-physiological constitution, "basically of the kind found in many mystics": see op. cit., n. 22, p. 56. Macdonald describes these phenomena as a pathological condition in Mohammed resulting in trances; he notes that it is not certain they were the results of a falling sickness: see op. cit., n. 47, p. 46. Later he admits that the mystery remains as to how Mohammed achieved these states of ecstasy during which he gave his revelations: see ibid., p. 68. Margoliouth calls Mohammed's revelations "some mental experience": see op. cit., n. 47, p. 19.

consoled his wife by explaining that these spells were brought about by the operation of the Holy Spirit of God himself[55] who appeared to him and revealed certain things touching the laws of Moses and of Christ.[56] Newton, echoed by modern scholars,[57] explains that the Archangel Gabriel was supposed to come down as an ambassador from heaven to reveal to Mahomet the divine words of God.[58] The disgust which such tales could arouse among Christians is understandable when one recognizes in these stories traces of the Biblical scene of the Annunciation.[59] Mahomet was even supposed to have been taken to hell and then to the very threshold of heaven, or of the essence of God,

---

55. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 4 v. Mahomet had the falling evil and "excused, that the Angell of God oftentimes talked with him, and vnable as a man to sustaine his diuine presence, he entered into this agonie and alteration of spirit, and by this visitation, he forelearned what was the almightie will and pleasure of God": Whetstones, op. cit., n. 12, p. 57. Mahomet also "published abrode that he was sente from God into the worlde, to giue lawes vnto the people": ibid., p. 58.

56. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 4 v. In this respect, his mission was similar to that of Moses: see Whetstones, op. cit., n. 12, p. 57. Nevertheless, Whetstones calls Mahomet "an atheist": see ibid., marginal note.

57. For the call of Mohammed by God through his messenger, the archangel Gabriel, to fulfil his apostolic mission, see Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 28 ff. For Mohammed's ascension to heaven under the guidance of the archangel Gabriel, see Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 109-110; Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 306. For other references to the archangel Gabriel, see Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 35 and 189 and op. cit., n. 48, pp. 104 ff.; Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 289. See also Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, p. 65. On the role of angels in prophetic revelations, see ibid., p. 67.

58. Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 5 v. Whetstones calls the messenger simply "the Angell of God": see op. cit., n. 12, p. 57.

59. See Luke 1: 26-33. Mohammed's experience was referred to as his Annunciation: see Chew, op. cit., n. 9, pp. 400-401.

during one of his dreams.[60] Scholars note that the authenticity of these religious experiences was questioned as well as that of the revelations which inspired his Koran. To many, he was nothing more than a fraud or an impostor.[61] This assessment justifies the antagonism displayed in popular accounts of his story. Modern scholars[62] affirm that, by this time, Mahomet

---

60. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 109-110. Sixteenth-century chroniclers might have taken this idea from the Koran. One verse of the Koran runs as follows: "Glory be to Him who carried his servant by night from the sacred temple of Mecca to the temple that is more remote, whose precinct we have blessed, that we might shew him our signs!": sura 92 : 1 , quoted from J.M. Rodwell, trans. and ed., The Koran (London, 1974 reprinted ed.), pp. 164-165. The temple is explained as that of Jerusalem. Mohammed was carried "thence through the seven heavens to the throne of God on the back of Borak, accompanied by Gabriel, according to some traditions; while others, and those too of early date, regard it as no more than a vision. It was, however, in all probability a dream": ibid., p. 164, n. 3. Subsequent tradition elaborated on the Koranic text, and with the centuries, gradually developed the legend of two cycles, the cycle of an ascension into heaven and that of an infernal voyage: see Chew op. cit., n. 9, pp. 409-410. Sale claims that Mohammed's story of his being taken up to heaven and conversing with God is thought to be exaggerated: see op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 80. See also Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, pp. 92 ff.; Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 153. See also Guillaume, op. cit., n. 48, p. xix. In this study, Guillaume explains that whether the experience was a dream or a vision, or not, makes no difference; the journey was as real as if it had been an actual physical experience: see ibid., pp. 181-186. See also Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, p. 9; Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 153.

61. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 33. For a Moslem interpretation of Mahomet's spiritual experience, see Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 76 ff. and 218 ff.; Margoliouth, op. cit., n. 47, p. 19. Mohammed and his followers after him used the inspired word of the Koran to further their political aspirations; how could Mohammed not be subsequently dubbed as an impostor? See Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 2, p. 101, n; see also ibid., p. 104 n. Some denied Mohammed his status as a prophet because of the absence of miracles: see Guillaume, op. cit., n. 35, p. 134, and op. cit., n. 48, p. 121.

62. See Watt, op. cit., n. 26, pp.4 and 8; Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 70-71 and 99; Macdonald, op. cit., n. 47, p. 10; Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 71; Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, p. 65; Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 59 and op. cit., n. 48, pp. 106 ff.

openly professed himself to be the messenger of God and a Prophet[63] while Newton says that Mahomet had now become "puffed vp with pryde".[64] Mahomet began to teach the people a new kind of religion which, according to Newton, is a collection of all the errors of the schisms and sects Mahomet knew[65] and which is described by modern scholarship as a mixture of Jewish, Christian, and other beliefs.[66] All of these eventually contributed to form his sacred book, the Koran.[67] Mahomet succeeded in winning disciples but he had to flee from his enemies in his home city Mecca in 593 A.D., according to Newton,[68] but really in 622 A.D., according to scholars,[69] date from which the Arabians reckon their calendar as from the year of the Hegira or the flight.

Mahomet considered he belonged to the line of Biblical prophets; he was the last and the greatest after Moses and Christ. As the "seal of the prophets"[70] foretold by Christ when he promised to send his Para-

---

63. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 5. See also Whetstones, op. cit., n. 12, p. 57.

64. Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 5. See also Whetstones, op. cit., n. 12, p. 57.

65. Mahomet began "to teach the people a new kind of religion, patched and gathered together out of the erronious Schismes and hereticall dreames of all Sectes": Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 5.

66. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 57 ff.; Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 61, 122-123 and 161. Macdonald qualifies Mohammed's religious teaching as "a strange jumble of Jewish and Christian conceptions": see op. cit., n. 47, p. 20. Mohammed was accused of having altered the Scriptures: see Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, pp. 106, 123. See also Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. 138.

67. For Biblical and Christian influences on the Koran, see Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 58 and 60 ff. See also Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 122 ff., 127, 161 and 185. Mohammed's sacred book became known as 'The Recitation', in Arabic as al-qur'an which became in English 'Alcoran' and later simply the Koran: see ibid., p. 83. For a general explanation of the nature of the Koran, see below, pp. 204 ff. and notes.

68. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 5 - 5 v.

69. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 23-24 and 39-40; Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 145-146.

70. See Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, p. 70; Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 107 and 149; Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 148.

clete[71] who would perfect his teaching.[72] Mahomet's place in the religious history of mankind was climactic. He closed the succession of Biblical prophets for whom the Moslems developed a particular reverence,[73] mainly Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, and Jesus.[74] Such claims were

---

71. Mohammed could base his claims of being the last prophet promised by Christ on several Scripture texts. One of these is found in John 14:16; it runs as follows: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever". The words "comforter" or "advocate", the word as used in 1 John 2:1, are the translations for the Greek word "Parakletos": see Scofield, ed. cit., n. 33, p. 1147, n. 1. Christ expressly had declared that he was leaving many things unrevealed (see John 16:12), that his revelation would be completed after the Spirit had come to teach all things to his followers (see John 14:26), to guide his followers unto all truth (see John 16:13), and show them things to come (ibid.). On these words could be based Mohammed's doctrinal and prophetic roles. See also Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, p. 70. Several conclusions could be drawn about the role of Islam. Islam was "the one true orthodox belief until the end of the world": see Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 116. Islam was sent to supersede the previous religions as well as fulfil them: see ibid., vol. 2, p. 8, n. 19. See also Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 148. Mohammed would say of himself: "I am what Abraham my father prayed for and the good news of Jesus": see Guillaume, op. cit., n. 48, p. 72. Mohammed's career had been foretold by soothsayers inspired by jinns: see ibid., p. 90.

72. See Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 240. Moslems are accused of having corrupted the Jewish and Christian Scriptures: see Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 123.

73. "The idea of a series of Prophets is genuinely Islamic, but Mohammed, in Moslem theology, is the last of the Prophets and the greatest, and after him there will come no more": Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 43. See also Watt, op. cit., n. 26, pp. 33 and 59.

74. Rodinson also mentions Lot, Jonah, Elijah, Job: see op. cit., n. 22, p. 62. Isaac, Aaron, Ishmael are also included in the line of prophets: see Margoliouth, op. cit., n. 47, p. 135. Moslems claim that Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed were all prophets of Islam: see Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 125. See also Guillaume, op. cit., n. 48, p. 16, n. 2. Mohammed frequently likened himself to Moses and the other Biblical prophets: see Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 2, p. 6, n. 11. He seemed to regard the prophets as either lineally descended one from the other or successors to each other in the office they held: see ibid., p. 13, n. 34.

enough to discredit him totally in the eyes of the Christians of Europe. Newton stresses that Mahomet believed his charge and office had been committed to him directly from the mouth of God.[75] Mahomet was to reinstate the religion which Moses and Christ had attempted to establish.[76] Religious militancy was soon adopted as the means by which he would accomplish his mission of curing "extreeme euilles with extreme remedies".[77] He was to use fire and sword on all who dare oppose his law and to become what Maxime Rodinson terms as the "prophet in armour"[78] feared by his enemies.[79] Newton brings out the earthliness of Mahomet's ambitions[80] and notes the

---

75. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 4 v. Mohammed was "one of the great figures of history whose overmastering conviction was that there was one God alone and that there should be one community of believers": Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 23. See also ibid., pp. 40 ff. Mohammed literally felt compelled to act as he did: see ibid., p. 29. See also Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 70. According to Gardet, the idea that the development of Mohammed's sense of mission especially assigned by God would have been gradual, that he would have posed as a prophet-founder of a religion much later in life, and that finally he would have understood the universality of his mission is essentially developed by Western thought. Mahomet's message was all of these simultaneously as one of the continuous line of prophets: see op. cit., n. 44, pp. 149, 152, and 223.

76. Indeed, Moslems believe that Moses was Mohammed in disguise: see Wherry op. cit., n. 35, vol. 2, p. 225, n. 104. Islam is thought to have been the religion of Moses: see ibid., p. 229, n. 127. Mohammed claimed that his was the mission of restoring Eternal Truth and of reviving the doctrine taught by the prophets of old, both Truth and doctrine being destined to the whole world: see Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, p. 10. See also Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 149; Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, pp. 137-138. Moslems are convinced that Jesus was a prophet of Islam: see Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, p. 6; and Thomas, W. Arnold, The Old and New Testaments in Muslim Religious Art (London, 1932), p. 38.

77. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 6.

78. See Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 179. On the place of political warfare for the cause of the faith of Islam, see ibid., pp. 216 ff. For a general account of Mohammed's military campaigns, see ibid., ch. 5.

79. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 33.

80. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 6-6 v. Sale analyses Mohammed's ambition as follows: "a violent desire of being reckoned an extraordinary person, which he could attain to by no means more effectually than by pretending to be a messenger sent from God to inform mankind of his will": Wherry op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1. Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 71.

motives and the nature of Mahomet's religious warfare. While scholars lay stress on Mahomet's mission to be that of eradicating idolatry and of promoting the worship of the "highest God",[81] Newton qualifies the people Mahomet is meant to destroy merely as "wicked". Newton goes on to describe how Mahomet was to enlarge the kingdom of God on earth and set up a more sacred and more imperial commonwealth than there had ever been; otherwise all mankind would shortly perish.[82] Newton illustrates how Mahomet put to effective use what has been recognised as exceptional powers of persuasion[83] to enlist supporters in his fight. Mahomet considered those who would help him as happy and blessed; they were chosen by God to be his ministers and helpers. Thus they would inherit not only the felicity of the life to come but "bee enriched with great wealth and possessions"[84] in this world. If they persisted in faith, subdued innumerable nations, and conquered most wealthy countries, the will of God was that they should possess the countries and the wealth, now in the hands of wicked men, enemies and adversaries of his law. Mahomet's followers were assured of success because of the wickedness of the adversaries whom God would not suffer any longer unpunished. Thus Mahomet won their aid and sustained their valiant courage by "the most infallible oracles of Almightie God".[85] Mahomet addressed them thus:

---

81. "To the Muslim, ... idolatry is an unforgivable sin": Guillaume op. cit., n. 22, p. 71. See also ibid., p. 40; Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 119-120; Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, pp. 60 ff. See also above, p. 155, notes 75 and 76.

82. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 6. Margoliouth also notes that Mohammed threatened his people with catastrophes if they refused to adhere to monotheism: see op. cit., n. 47, p. 20.

83. Guillaume says the following on Mohammed's powers of persuasion: "Trustworthy tradition depicts a man of amazing ability in winning men's hearts by persuasion and in coercing and disarming his opponents": op. cit., n. 22, p. 53. In fact, Islam was first propagated by persuasion before Mohammed had to take up arms to defend his territory: see Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, pp. 82-83.

84. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 6 v.

85. See ibid.

"Therefore if you desire to bee partakers of the kingdome of Heauen, and of so great rychesse and glory vpon Earth, it is meete and expedient that you all sweare and do homage vnto me, that must be your Captaine and Ringleader".[86] All his followers pledged themselves by a solemn oath. He urged them to warlike valour, in return of which riches, glory, renown, perpetual felicity would be granted them. These were the rewards set by God in return for their valiant service.[87]

Mahomet, was persuaded then that all the promises made to Abraham in the Scriptures belonged to Islam.[88] Puffed up with his success, Mahomet sent letters sealed with a signet of silver inscribed with these words: "Mahomet the messanger of God" to the neighbouring kings.[89] He created four captains called "the sharpe Swordes of God",[90] and commanded them to go to the four parts of the world and "kill all suche as repugned hys Law".[91]

---

86. Ibid.

87. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 6 v. This side of Mahomet's nature is described more vividly by Newton than by the other biographers used in this study. Rodinson, however, analyses the unscrupulous methods Mohammed used to gather support in the following words:

> Muhammad was able to bribe influential men with suitable presents and, like a true politician, to play on men's ambition, greed, vanity, fears and sometimes no doubt (although more rarely) on their thirst for idealism and devotion. Some were completely converted, others gave their allegiance while remaining pagan at heart.

As Rodinson notes, "the rough and ready Beduin scarcely distinguished between ... various reasons for joining" Mahomet: see op. cit., n. 22, pp. 268-269.

88. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 10. "Mahomet then persuaded the Sarisens, a people of Arabia, that the land of promise belonged vnto them, as the legittimate successors, of Abraham": Whetstones, op. cit., n. 12, p. 59.

89. Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 10.

90. See ibid.

91. Ibid.

Mahomet was suddenly taken ill, perhaps from poisoning, and died.[92] His burial is described as follows:

> His bodie without any Princely furniture of ceremonial solemnitie, was shrined and lapped in a white Sheete three tymes double, and so beying chested in an yron coffin, was after a homely sort buried: where afterwarde his kinsfolkes and Allyes edified a sumptuous and magnificall Temple of bricke worke, and arched the same wyth a vault so pargetted with Lodestones (whose nature is to draw yron vnto it) that the yron Coffyn wherein Mahomet his body was inclosed, was drawen vp, euen vnto the toppe of the Churche and there hangeth.[93]

The tomb became a centre of pilgrimage worshipped of all the East.[94]

Sixteenth-century chroniclers had to recognize, as scholars do today, that Mahomet's achievements had been extraordinary in time and scope. In ten years, his rule had spread over the Arabian peninsula, Iraq, and Palestine.[95] After his death, his followers were to extend the rule of Islam to the far regions of Europe, Africa, and Asia in the space of only fifteen years. The conquests of Islam were comparable to the greatest in the history of the world.[96] Mohammed's career had been one of uninterrupted

---

92. Whetstones says that Mahomet was poisoned at the age of forty: see op. cit., n. 12, p. 59.

93. Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 10v. Apparently, Mahomet would often say that after his death, he should ascend up into heaven: see Whetstones op. cit., n. 12, p. 59. See Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, p. 44, n. 144. Henry Smith says that Mahomet's followers, despairing of their master's resurrection after his death, finally put him in an iron coffin which was drawn and held up by mighty lodestones fixed in the roof of the temple: see Gods Arrowe against Atheists. Sig. J 3v, quoted in Chew, op. cit., n.9, pp. 413-414. But according to Chew, this tradition does not exist among the Moslems: see ibid., p. 414,

94. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 10 v. In Mecca, Mahomet "is worshipped of all the people of the East, yea of the greater part of the worlde": Whetstones, op. cit., n. 12, p. 59.

95. See Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, p. 11.

96. See ibid. According to Hamidullah, Moslem military achievements at this time have no equal in the history of the world: see ibid., p. 485. See also Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 3.

warfare during which he had fulfilled the duties of ruler, commander, and prophet. As a ruler, he had constantly increased his realms; as a commander, he had constantly increased his armies; as a prophet, he had dedicated himself to the triumph of monotheism everywhere.[97] Newton's Mahomet had had as outstanding a career if even for the wrong reasons by Christian standards. As a religious figure, one wonders whether he was not constantly present in the consciousness of the Moslem as the ideal he was meant to reproduce in much the same way that Christ was the model for the Christian to imitate. The historical accounts show that Timur had identified himself with Mahomet.[98] Marlowe was possibly inspired by similar thoughts while he created his stage character of the Moslem world. Mahomet is presented as the counterpart of Christ in Marlowe's play[99] and Tamburlaine parallels Mahomet's career in many ways.[100]

Thus the above considerations show that many facts found in Newton's description of Mahomet and corroborated by other sixteenth-century accounts of his career are confirmed by the findings of modern Islamic scholars. This would seem to indicate that Mahomet's image was already well outlined in Marlowe's days. But what relationship is there between this information about Mohammed, or Mahomet, and the study of the religious elements in Tamburlaine, Parts I and II? First of all, the career of Tamburlaine recalls that of Mahomet in more ways than one. Both were historical figures of gigantic proportions whose actions permanently changed the world. In fact, Tamburlaine was probably the most powerful leader who ruled Islam since the time of Mohammed himself. Rodinson, with certain reservations it is true, uses the expression "a historical force"[101] to describe Mohammed;

---

97. See Margoliouth, op. cit., n. 47, p.22.

98. See above, pp. 82 ff. and notes.

99. See below, p. 165 and n. 125.

100. See below, pp. 174 ff. and 180-181.

101. See Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. xvii.

similar terms have repeatedly been used with respect to Tamburlaine. Mohammed informed his politics with his religious mission; as the play progresses, Tamburlaine draws the force of his authority more and more from his supposed mission as a Scourge of the Highest God.[102] The development of the career of these two men follows a similar overall pattern. Their rise to power is gradual. Like Mahomet, Tamburlaine comes from humble parents. Both were shepherds; Tamburlaine tells Zenocrate, "I am ... / ... a shepheard by my Parentage" (1T.1.2.35). Like Mohammed, Tamburlaine knew all about exacting payments from travellers for a safe-conduct through his own territories (1T. 1.2.11-25).[103] Both acquired wealth and social status through the women they married; it is thanks to the treasures taken from Zenocrate and her suite that Tamburlaine could contemplate having larger armies and waging war on a larger scale (1T. 1.2.182 ff.). Mahomet and Tamburlaine both claimed they had prophetic visions or dreams. While Mahomet's are obvious and direct, Tamburlaine's are indirectly alluded to. These claims are accepted whole-heartedly in neither case. Tamburlaine's mission as a prophet is nipped in the bud at the very outset. He is spoken of as nothing more than a visionary, stirred and "misled by dreaming prophesies" (1T. 1.1.41). The integrity of Tamburlaine as a prophet will not exceed that of Mahomet in his similar mission.[104] Both are recognized as messengers of God. Tamburlaine speaks of himself as "the wrathfull messenger of mighty Jove" (2T. 5.1.92), the word "Jove" often being inter-

---

102. For a detailed study of Tamburlaine's mission as a scourge, see below, pp. 446 ff. and 591 ff.

103. Tamburlaine is introduced on the stage in the course of a discussion between himself and Zenocrate about the right of passage through his territory: see 1T. 1.2. especially lines 11-25. For Mohammed's similar practice, see Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 4.

104. See below, pp. 476 ff. and notes.

changeable with that of "God".[105] Mohammed is regularly visited by angels and archangels, Gabriel being his main instructor. Does Marlowe have this in mind when he makes his hero allude to a winged messenger in the following lines:

> Such lavish will I make of Turkish blood,
> That Jove shall send his winged Messenger[106]
> To bid me sheath my sword, and leave the field?
> (2T. 1.3.165-167)

Both dedicate their lives to the eradication of idolatry and to the promotion of monotheism. The allusions which point to Tamburlaine's spiritual mission for the cause of monotheism are not glaringly obvious but they, nevertheless, are present.[107] Tamburlaine's and Mahomet's careers[108] and missions[109] are similar in many ways; the theme of idolatry plays an important part in both.[110] Mohammed makes a spiritual journey to heaven, to its seven mansions, under the guidance of his companion Gabriel. Did Marlowe have Mohammed's spiritual journey in mind when he makes Tamburlaine utter the following words during

---

105. For Marlowe's various uses of the word 'Jove', see below, pp. 466 ff.

106. This passage offers a typical example of the ambiguities which Marlowe loves to introduce in his text, thereby expanding the literal reading into manifold meanings. The significance of the expression "his winged messenger" depends on that read into the word "Jove": see below, pp.467-468. If by "Jove" is meant the Biblical or even the God of Islam, then the "winged messenger" may well be an angel. This would imply a familiar intercourse between Tamburlaine and angels. If the meaning of "Jove" is restricted to a mythological reading, then the "winged messenger" can only mean Mercury: see John D. Jump, ed., Tamburlaine the Great: Parts I and II. (University of Nebraska, 1967), p. 119 n.166.

107. For Mahomet's mission, see above, p.150 and n. 50;p.153 and notes 65,71. On Tamburlaine's position with respect to idolatry, see below, ch. 3.

108. See below, pp. 168 ff.

109. For points of similarities between the idealized image of Mahomet and Tamburlaine's spiritual image, see below, pp. 216 ff. and notes.

110. For the place of idolatry in the play, see below, ch. 3.

the illness of Zenocrate: "Then let some holy trance convay my thoughts, / Up to the pallace of th'imperiall heaven" (2T. 2.4.34-35)? The expressions "holy trance" and "imperiallheaven", the abode of God according to Renaissance theories about the universe,[111] are strangely reminiscent of Mohammed's experiences. In the course of this same spiritual journey, Mohammed is made to visit hell.[112] Does Marlowe imply that his hero has a similar knowledge of hell when he makes him boast of the millions of souls he has sent from battlefields "to spread [his] fame through hell and up to heaven" (1T. 5.1.467)? One must remember that Tamburlaine's death is referred to as the introduction of hell into heaven. At one point, Tamburlaine visualizes the havoc his presence could bring about in hell:

> Should I but touch the rusty gates of hell,
> The triple headed Cerberus would howle,
> And wake blacke Jove to crouch and kneele to me.
> (2T. 5.1.96-98)

Mahomet and Tamburlaine are both presented as possessing a familiar knowledge of these abodes.

Like Mohammed, Tamburlaine suddenly disappears from the scene. Like Mohammed, Tamburlaine has a sudden seizure and dies shortly after. This is contrary to what the historical accounts and the chronicles had to say about Timur's[113] or Tamerlane's death.[114] It is true that Marlowe may have borrowed this detail from Knolles's story of Mahomet II some pages further on after the account on Tamburlaine's career. There, the story is told about how Mahomet II was suddenly taken ill after having been poisoned.[115]

---

111. See Jump, ed. cit., n. 106, p. 41, n.15.

112. See above, p. 151 and n. 57 and p. 152 and n. 60.

113. See above, p. 64, n. 131; p. 79 and n. 215.

114. See above, pp. 122-123.

115. For the career of the mighty Mahomet II, see Knolles, op. cit., n. 12, pp. 337-433; for the careers of Bajazet and Tamburlaine, see ibid., pp. 203-239. All through those pages, one can detect striking resemblances in ideas and expressions between Knolles's text and that

(continued overleaf.....)

Marlowe possibly drew this detail from the story of this great Turkish leader, for there are several others in Tamburlaine which suggest that Marlowe may have been influenced by Knolles.[116] Whatever Marlowe's source of inspiration may have been, Elizabethans were probably quick to relate any great Moslem warrior with the founder of Islam and, consequently, in this case, to detect similarities between Tamburlaine and Mahomet as Marlowe had probably intended them to do. Tamburlaine and Mahomet were similar in death as they had been on several points in their lives.

Marlowe includes the myth of Mahomet's suspended coffin in his play.[117] This myth had stirred the imaginations of chroniclers and poets for centuries, from the early Middle Ages down to the Renaissance period. Many attempts had been made to explain this unusual phenomenon. Chew has a lengthy account of the history of this myth which caught the attention of questioning minds well on into the eighteenth century.[118] Academic circles were not by any means indifferent or even scornful of this subject. A Cambridge student deigned to speak on the rumored suspension of Mahomet's corpse between two magnets[119] for his "declamation", a set speech during which he was expected to display his rhetorical and literary proficiency while parading the knowledge he had collected in his commonplace book.[120] On the Continent, Mohammed's

---

115. Continued..... of Marlowe. The death of Mahomet II is described as follows: Mahomet II fell sick in a city of Bithynia "and there for the space of three dayes was greeuously tormented with an extreame paine...which some supposed to be the collicke and died": see ibid., p. 433. Most men thought he had been poisoned.

116. See below, App. A.

117. There were at least six other similar myths known at the time: see Chew, op. cit., n. 9, pp. 414-415.

118. See ibid., pp. 419-422.

119. See St. John's College Library, Cambridge, MS. S44 , mentioned in William Costello, S.J., The Scholastic Curriculum at Early Seventeenth-Century Cambridge (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), p. 32 and p. 175, n. 77.

120. See ibid., p. 32.

coffin was the subject of a serious doctoral dissertation.[121] Thus the myth caught the interest of many writers, poets,[122] and others.[123] Great pains were taken to explain or to disprove this mysterious phenomenon. Elizabethans and, therefore, Marlowe were familiar with this myth.[124] Both Marlowe and his audience were probably aware that the legend had grown amongst many others

---

121. Chew notes the following case:

> As a curiosity of scholarship it may be noted that towards the end of the seventeenth century the problem of the tomb of Mahomet was made the subject of a doctoral dissertation at Marburg written in the most solemnly Teutonic style: Disquisitio Historico-Physica de Sepulcro Muhammedis, Marburg, 1680. The disquisitor, Samuel Andreas, begins his discussion with this contemptuous remark: 'Nam quamvis nostra nihil intersit, quomodo ille et Pseudo-propheta cubet, aere an terra occupet, qui nec aere nec terra dignus; tamen cum simulcrum peregrinantium superstitione quotannis hoc tempore verno frequentetur, ipsaque traditio recepta sit, veritatem eruere conabimur'. Citing an abundance of authorities, ..., for and against the pendant tomb, Andreas discusses the physical possibility of such a phenomenon. He reaches the conclusion that it is physically possible; that there are analogous cases well authenticated; but that Mahomet is not so buried.

See op. cit., n. 9, p. 422, n. 4.

122. Chew notes the interest in this subject as manifested in the writings of Brother Fabri who was in Palestine in 1481-1483, and of Martin Baumgarten who travelled in the East about 1507: see op. cit., n. 9, p. 417. He also mentions Sigmund Feyerabend's Reysbuch dess Heyligen Lands published in 1584: see ibid., n. 4. All these told of the legend of the suspended tomb or of its destruction by storms. Robert Baron, disciple of Ben Jonson, rejected the idea of the suspended tomb: see ibid., p. 419.

123. Chew notes references to Mahomet's suspended coffin in the following dramatic works of the period, that is, in Francis Beaumont's The Scornful Lady. III, ii; in the anonymous Diana. IV, v; in Thomas Nashe's The Unfortunate Traveller (Works. ii, 249) and in Simon Baylie's The Wizard (ed. Henry de Vocht, Materials. Louvain, 1930, ll. 763 ff.): see op. cit., n. 9, p. 418 and notes 3 and 4.

124. Chew describes this myth as "the most famous of all Christian traditions of Mahomet - one that has given a proverbial simile to the English language": see op. cit., n. 9, p. 414. This legend, which could be traced back as far as the eleventh century, was widespread: see ibid. After having described how Mahomet was enclosed in an iron coffin after his death, Henry Smith goes on to say that Mahomet's companions

(continued overleaf .....)

trying to present Mahomet as a parody of Christ.[125] Furthermore, in the dramatist's mind, the audience was probably expected to relish the use he was making of this story. Thus, ironically, under Marlowe's pen, the Turkish Orcanes is made to swear to keep his peace treaty with the Christian Sigismund by the contents of a mere legend:

> By sacred Mahomet, the friend of God,
> Whose holy Alacaron remaines with us,
> Whose glorious body when he left the world,
> Closde in a coffyn mounted up the aire,[126]
> And hung on stately Mecas Temple roofe,
> I sweare to keepe this truce inviolable.
> (2T.1.1.137-142)

Of what value was an oath sworn by the truth of a myth or a legend? This

---

124. Continued .....

> convey to the roofe of the Temple mighty
> loadstones, they lift up the iron Coffin,
> where the loadstones according to their
> nature drawe to them the iron, and holde
> it up, and there stands Mahomet on high.

Quoted from Gods Arrowe against Atheists (1593), sig. J 3 v, in Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 414. Smith bases his account on Nauclerus's Chronica (1516 and later editions) and on the Enneades of Marcus Antonius Coccius (Sabellicus): see Chew, ibid.. p. 414, n. 1. Marlowe could have read about this legend also in Chalcondylas, op. cit, n. 12, p. 40. De Vigenere, in his translation of the work of Chalcondylas, notes that this tradition was no more than a fable: see op. cit., n. 12, p. 166, n.

125. Islamic tradition had "borrowed from the Gospel narrative, with the object of assimilating the character of Muhammed to that of Jesus": Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, p. 17. For Mohammed's role as the Eternal Word of God as Christ was, see below, pp. 184 ff.

126. Mahomet's tomb was erroneously believed by Marlowe, as well as by many others, to be in Mecca instead of Medina. For a discussion on this erroneous belief, see Chew, op. cit., n. 9, pp. 416 and 419-422.

could be one of Marlowe's ways of emphasizing the falsehood generally attached to Islam, as that faith was seen by Christians in general.

Finally, Marlowe alludes to the veneration the Moslems still held for their founder. Mohammed's burial place was to become a shrine supposedly venerated by all true Moslems. The regular practice was to make a pilgrimage to Mohammed's sepulchre at least once in one's lifetime. Marlowe makes the Turkish Bajazet mindful of the devotion due to Mahomet's tomb. Bajazet swears to defeat Tamburlaine "by Mahomet, my Kinsmans sepulcher" (1T, 3.3.76), a vivid reality for him. Zabina, his queen, later prays Mahomet to grant her husband this same anticipated victory. She reminds the Prophet of her husband's devotion, of him "that offered jewels to thy sacred shrine, / When first he war'd against the Christians" (1T, 3.3.199-200).

Thus, Marlowe incorporated in his play these Moslem elements which would have been familiar even to the less initiated on matters of Islam. What did the dramatist hope to accomplish by introducing these elements? First, their presence was bound to develop a proper exotic mood to which Elizabethans would inevitably respond for reasons which have already been explained.[127] The echo of Mahomet's name resounding at various intervals was bound to evoke the Moslem regions and their widespread faith, for the existence of which Mahomet was largely responsible. Furthermore, by alluding to Mahomet, as he did, Marlowe was creating a Moslem setting for the Moslem hero that Tamburlaine had to be. At the same time, these elements helped to spell out Tamburlaine's character even if this is evident only to a slight extent at this stage of the analysis. The Moslem allusions already pointed to in the play helped to differentiate the moral image of Tamburlaine from that of Bajazet with respect to their standards and attitudes towards Islam. Bajazet stood out as a devout Moslem while Marlowe was discreetly sketching the dramatic image of Tamburlaine against that of Mahomet. It was mentioned

---

127. See above, pp. 38-39, 42 and n. 39.

before[128] that the material available in the contemporary accounts on the story of Tamerlane offered few descriptive details of any assistance to a dramatist. It has been suggested[129] that Mahomet was probably the idealized model which all zealous Moslems were expected to imitate in their own lives, especially in fulfilling the mission assigned to Islam, that of the militant eradication of idolatry. Since Tamburlaine was considered to be a modern version of the warring conqueror and since he belonged to the Moslem world, Marlowe was possibly directing the attention of his audiences to the several parallels which could emerge from the general pattern of these two careers. Elizabethans were in all probability sufficiently familiar with the story of Mahomet to be aware of the implied analogies which Marlowe was making between Mahomet and Tamburlaine. These parallels and analogies, tenuous as they seem for the time being, may have been quite effective in creating at a deeper level the moral image of Marlowe's stage hero. Affinities between the two great leaders could perhaps, by analogy, raise Tamburlaine above the plane of experience explained merely on human terms, however great his may have been, into the category of those entrusted with a divine mission, favoured by a divine protection, and supported by divine help in their superhuman achievements. All of these were attributes attached to the person and career of Mahomet and seem to have been part of Tamburlaine's assets as well. Perhaps Marlowe meant to go so far as to present Tamburlaine as a kind of second Mahomet. An examination of Newton's insights into Mahomet the man and religious leader may offer additional and pertinent arguments to support this view.

Marlowe's description of Tamburlaine recalls Newton's account of Mahomet in many ways. Mahomet is described by Newton as a man of fair

---

128. See above, p. 139.

129. See above, p. 159.

countenance, well proportioned,[130] and very courteous. Mahomet's appearance suggests a model of human perfection.[131] Marlowe has chosen to depict Tamburlaine also in terms which imply human perfection, however contrary this may have been to the information about him in historical accounts and chronicles.[132] Tamburlaine is "In every part proportioned like the man, / Should make the world subdued to Tamburlaine" (1T. 2.1.29-30). Theridamas is fascinated by Tamburlaine's appearance when he first meets him, "A Scythian Shepheard, so imbellished / With Nature's pride, and richest furniture" (1T. 1.2.155-156). Even Cosroe, his enemy, is impressed by Menaphon's report on "the face and personage of a woondrous man" (1T. 2.1.32). Some critics have pointed to Tamburlaine's kind and courteous manner towards his associates. In fact, Turks were often commended in travellers' accounts for their courtesy and civility.[133] Newton says Mahomet had wit.[134] No direct allusion is made to the wit of Tamburlaine but the latter deplores the "want of courage and of wit" (2T. 1.3.24) in his sons. Later, in a spate of fury against Calyphas who has defected from the battlefront, Tamburlaine kills his son "Wherein was neither corrage, strength or wit, / But follie, sloth, and damned idlenesse" (2T. 4.1.125-126). Mahomet is praised for his eloquence and his power of persuasion. These gifts, highly valued by the Elizabethans,[135] are enjoyed by Tamburlaine in contrast to the witless Mycetes who must rely on his brother Cosroe to transmit his decisions and stir his soldiers to

---

130. One must note, however, that these expressions were almost clichés. They recur again and again in Knolles's Historie: see op. cit., n. 12, pp. 27, 54, etc.

131. See above, p. 149 and notes 44 and 45.

132. See above, p. 58 and n. 102, and pp. 103-104.

133. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 3v.

134. See Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 53.

135. The Elizabethans expected to find "two vertues in a gouernour, wysdom and eloquence": see B.V., Exod. 4:16, n. (i).

action (1T. 1.1. and 3.). Zenocrate is won by Tamburlaine's word and manner (1T. 3.2.10-11, 37-39) whereas Olympia is not won by Theridamas's laudatory speeches later in the play (2T. 3.4.38 ff and 4.2.14 ff). Theridamas is compelled to praise Tamburlaine's unmatched power of persuasion. According to him, "Not Hermes Prolocutor to the Gods, / Could use perswasions more patheticall" (1T. 1.2.210-211). He has to admit that he has been won by Tamburlaine's words. Indeed, Tamburlaine's "woorking woordes" (1T. 2.3.25), especially when "his actions top his speech" (1T. 2.3.26), are enough to excuse Theridamas for having abandoned his king in favour of Tamburlaine (1T. 2.3.25-32). Throughout the play, Marlowe most often places his loftiest poetry on the lips of Tamburlaine.

The moral image of Tamburlaine is also similar in several respects to that of Mahomet. Newton's descriptions, as well as several other sixteenth-century accounts, reflect the Christian's scorn for Mahomet, and for anyone Moslem by emphasizing the earthliness of their aspirations and the materialistic character of their interests. Newton and others lay stress upon the fact of the Ismaelite ancestry of Mahomet as opposed to the spiritual heritage of the Christians, the proper heirs of Abraham. In addition to being a descendant of Ismael,[136] Newton points out that Mahomet was the descendant of Esau and Cora, son of Esau. No Elizabethan, however slightly familiar with

---

136. In fact, the Saracens were often designated by the name of Agarenians because they were considered descendants of Ismael, son of Agar and Abraham: see Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 62. One could recall the importance Marlowe's Barabas attached to the promises made to Abraham in favour of Israel and the false interpretation he gave to these promises. see JM. 1.1.105-111. See also ibid., 2.1.12-14; 2.3.230.

the Biblical notions implied in this ancestry, would have missed the spiritual implications of being a mere Ismaelite or Edomite. Perhaps the Elizabethan might have vaguely associated the name of Cora with his namesake of the line of Reuben, notoriously remembered for his rebellions against Moses, the Prophet of God and of Israel,[137] but there would have been no such ambiguity about the fact that Mahomet, or any Moslem for that matter, was a descendant of Ismael or Esau. Ismael had started the line of Abraham's descendants who would inherit the earth[138] as opposed to the line of Isaac who would inherit God's spiritual blessings. Promises that Ismael and his posterity would inherit earthly blessings had been confirmed in Esau[139] while Jacob and his descendants had been repeatedly assured of the spiritual blessings promised to his posterity, the people of God who were to be fulfilled in Christ and his followers.[140] Thus, by birth, Mahomet's ancestry definitely excluded him

---

137. See Num. 16.

138. The Bible says this of Ismael: "So God was with the childe and he grewe and dwelt in the wildernes, and was an archer": G.V., Gen. 21:20. The following marginal note is added: "As touching outwarde things, God caused him to prosper": G.V., Gen. 21:20,n(i). The word "archer" is explained as "hunter": see G.V., Gen. 21:20, gloss. Hunting was considered a very material occupation, not associated with God's elect like Isaac, Jacob, etc., but with objectional characters like Nimrod (see Gen. 10:9), Ismael and Esau. However, Moslem jurists refused the principle by which Ismael was made inferior to Isaac: see Margoliouth, op. cit., n. 47, p. 78. For related inferences in the Arab's justification for plundering the goods of the earth, see above p.147,n.35. For Ismaelite inferences in the play, see below,pp.171,173ff. Furthermore, wealth and dignity were promised to Ismael: see B.V., Gen. 17:20, n. (q).

139. "Esau was a cunning hunter and liued in the fields" (G.V., Gen. 25:27), while Jacob was a "simple and innocent" man who lived in tents (see ibid., and gloss). Later Isaac's blessing on Esau is explained in the following words: "Esau was blessed temporarily, ..., his fathers blessing toke place in worldlie things": G.V., Gen. 36:1,n.(a). Elsewhere in the Bible the following comment is made concerning Esau: "Esaus earthy mynde careth but for to satisfie his carnal desire": B.V., Gen. 25:33,n(l). Christians might have easily associated Mahomet with Esau both for his earthly interests as well as for his militant pursuits. Esau had been condemned by God to live through his sword: see Gen. 27:40; Mahomet saw warfare as a necessary duty to wipe out idolatry.

140. See Rom. 9, 10, 11.

the Biblical notions implied in this ancestry, would have missed the spiritual implications of being a mere Ismaelite or Edomite. Perhaps the Elizabethan might have vaguely associated the name of Cora with his namesake of the line of Reuben, notoriously remembered for his rebellions against Moses, the Prophet of God and of Israel,[137] but there would have been no such ambiguity about the fact that Mahomet, or any Moslem for that matter, was a descendant of Ismael or Esau. Ismael had started the line of Abraham's descendants who would inherit the earth[138] as opposed to the line of Isaac who would inherit God's spiritual blessings. Promises that Ismael and his posterity would inherit earthly blessings had been confirmed in Esau[139] while Jacob and his descendants had been repeatedly assured of the spiritual blessings promised to his posterity, the people of God who were to be fulfilled in Christ and his followers.[140] Thus, by birth, Mahomet's ancestry definitely excluded him

---

137. See Num. 16.

138. The Bible says this of Ismael: "So God was with the childe and he grewe and dwelt in the wildernes, and was an archer": G.V., Gen. 21:20. The following marginal note is added: "As touching outwarde things, God caused him to prosper": G.V., Gen. 21:20,n.(i). The word "archer" is explained as "hunter": see G.V., Gen. 21:20, gloss. Hunting was considered a very material occupation, not associated with God's elect like Isaac, Jacob, etc., but with objectional characters like Nimrod (see Gen. 10:9), Ismael and Esau. However, Moslem jurists refused the principle by which Ismael was made inferior to Isaac: see Margoliouth, op. cit., n. 47, p. 78. For related inferences in the Arab's justification for plundering the goods of the earth, see above,p.147,n.35. For Ismaelite inferences in the play, see below,pp.171,173ff. Furthermore, wealth and dignity were promised to Ismael: see B.V., Gen. 17:20, n. (q).

139. "Esau was a cunning hunter and liued in the fields" (G.V., Gen. 25:27), while Jacob was a "simple and innocent" man who lived in tents (see ibid., and gloss). Later Isaac's blessing on Esau is explained in the following words: "Esau was blessed temporarily, ..., his fathers blessing toke place in worldlie things": G.V., Gen. 36:1,n.(a). Elsewhere in the Bible the following comment is made concerning Esau: "Esaus earthy mynde careth but for to satisfie his carnal desire": B.V., Gen. 25:33,n(l). Christians might have easily associated Mahomet with Esau both for his earthly interests as well as for his militant pursuits. Esau had been condemned by God to live through his sword: see Gen. 27:40; Mahomet saw warfare as a necessary duty to wipe out idolatry.

140. See Rom. 9, 10, 11.

from Israel, the chosen race of God, in the same way that his function in history opposed him to Christianity.[141] The significance of Mahomet's ancestry would have been readily understood by the Elizabethans. In this perspective, Mahomet's claim to all the promises of Abraham, generally understood to be the spiritual inheritance promised by God, made him a fraud and a braggart. Only Israel and Christendom could make such a claim. These details suggest the earthliness of the moral perspective in which Mahomet and his followers were viewed by Marlowe's contemporaries. Little surprising is it, therefore, that emphasis is placed on earthly rewards when Mahomet recruits followers and that pride and ambition were his drives to action. With these considerations in mind, can one conclusively affirm that Marlowe was not inspired by the popular image of Mahomet when he emphasizes the pride and ambition of Tamburlaine and when he makes his hero opt so emphatically for "the sweet fruition of an earthly crowne" (1T 2.7.29)? In the context of this passage (1T. 2.7.12-29), the crown is enclosed within the limits of earthly values and presented as the only highest possible fruit of man's endeavour. Tamburlaine's affirmation categorizes him among the earthly and evokes the pursuits of Mahomet's line of ancestry. Both would expect the same heritage, that of earthly gains. One may add that, in the mind of committed Christians, earthly values were easily qualified as evil, even satanical. Earthly benefits were the arguments Satan had used to tempt Eve and Christ.[142] Hence

---

141. In the minds of European Christians, the role of armies fighting against Islam or the Turks was easily identified with that of Israel fighting for the cause of God. In a hortatory speech made to the Knights of the Church about to challenge the Turkish Soliman, an Archbishop of the Latin Church in Rhodes compares the Knights to David defeating Goliath and the enemies they will have to face to the Egyptians, Moabites, Philistines, Madianites, Canaanites and others, all of whom were defeated by Israel: see Françoys de Belle-Forest, Harengves militaires.... Recueillies et faictes Françoyses (Paris, 1573), pp. 1259-1260.

142. See Gen. 3:1-6 and Matt. 4:3-11; Luke 4:3-13.

the double image attached to Mahomet; he had been great as a human historical figure but evil as a religious one. Was Marlowe trying to create a similar double image of his hero? Was he modelling this image on that of Mahomet?

Accounts of both sixteenth-century and modern scholars agree on the fact that pride and ambition were important drives in Mahomet's career.[143] In no uncertain terms does Newton depict Mahomet as one seeking promotion and authority and aspiring to the sovereignty of the empire.[144] Once again, these moral traits aptly suit Tamburlaine. Allusions to his ambition are several. Tamburlaine aspires to rule as did Mahomet. This trait is made evident from the first time that Tamburlaine's name is mentioned in the play. He hopes to reign in Asia (1T. 1.1.42) and "make himselfe the Monarch of the East" (1T. 1.1.44). As the play progresses, Tamburlaine's aspirations broaden in scope. Already he boasts to the captive Zenocrate that, with time, he means to measure "the limits of his Emperie / By East and West, as Phoebus doth his course" (1T. 1.2.39-40). Tamburlaine's ambitions are nothing short of world rule. Menaphon describes Tamburlaine as "thirsting with soverainty" (1T. 2.1.20). Bajazet warns Tamburlaine that his ambitious pride will make him fall (1T. 4.2.76). Later in the play, Tamburlaine admits that in him "an incorporeall spirit mooves, / ... / Which makes [him] valiant, proud, ambitious" (2T. 4.1.114 and 116). Ambition is obviously the central force which drives the action of the play as it was one of the motives impelling Mahomet to pursue his mission. These aspirations set the pace for the action of the play in the same way that Mahomet's ambitions nourished by the idea of one God and, therefore, of one world under one rule or community led by the banner of Islam set the pace for his military campaigns. The immediate motives might have differed but in both cases they were covered by the excuse of a religious mission, that of being a scourge for Tamburlaine and that of

---

143. See above, p. 149 and n. 45; p. 155 and n. 80.

144. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 4. See also Whetstones, op. cit., n. 12, p. 57.

eradicating idolatry in the case of Mahomet. As a matter of fact, the religious motives of both could overlap in many areas.

Because both leaders must resort to arms to follow their religious pursuits, both have to muster an army. It is interesting to note what little space and importance religious motives have in the arguments used to win followers. The rewards promised to the faithful companions of warfare are mainly material and earthly. Mahomet's methods[145] place little value on spiritual rewards in comparison to the material benefits to be gained. The same may be said of Tamburlaine. While it is true that Mahomet promises his faithful followers that they will inherit the felicity of heaven, heavenly rewards are only suggested in Tamburlaine. Although Theridamas may anticipate sharing "celestiall thrones" (1T. 1.2.237) with Tamburlaine after his death, the reward is nevertheless presented in terms of earthly felicity. The dramatist may have had reasons for withholding the regions of heaven from Tamburlaine and his men. Christians had banned the "satanical" Moslems[146] from the heavenly regions long before the days of Marlowe. As a Moslem, Tamburlaine had to share the same fate.

Indeed, instead of men striving for heavenly rewards in Mahomet's and Tamburlaine's worlds, the opposite movement seems to take place. Divinity's main concern seems to be that of lavishing earthly benefits upon its elect.[147] Mahomet promised his helpers that they would be enriched with great wealth and possessions in this world. In fact, the will of God was that, if they should subdue innumerable nations and conquer most wealthy countries, they should possess these lands and their wealth.[148] In Marlowe's play, divinity

---

145. See above, p. 155 and n. 80; pp. 156-157 and p. 157 and n. 87.

146. Mahomet's satanical "opinions buried millions of soules in hell": Whetstones, op. cit., n. 12, p. 56.

147. Is Marlowe mindful of the Ismaelite character of the Arabs? See above, pp. 147 ff. and p. 147, n. 33; p. 170 and n. 138.

148. See above, pp. 169 ff. and notes.

becomes even more enterprising in this respect. Marlowe presents a deity which showers earthly benefits directly upon its elect in anticipation of their needs. Indeed, divine intervention occurs in Tamburlaine's affairs only to support promises of earthly rewards, as a study of the interview between Tamburlaine and Theridamas will show.

Tamburlaine first resorts to the display of the lavish wealth he has just confiscated from the captive Zenocrate to shake Theridamas's sense of loyalty to his king Mycetes (1T. 1.2.138ff.). Tamburlaine orders his men to "open the Males" (1T. 1.2.138), to "lay out [the] golden wedges to the view,/ That their reflexions may amaze the Perseans" (1T. 1.2.139-140). Indeed, the earthly rewards are most enticing especially when presented as part of Jove's plans to promote Tamburlaine in rank and power. Tamburlaine makes Theridamas aware of Jove's intervention in the acquisition of this wealth: "See how he raines down heaps of gold in showers, / As if he meant to give my Souldiers pay" (1T. 1.2.182-183). Not only has Jove showered down the wealth which Theridamas sees before his very eyes but Tamburlaine assures him that he enjoys Jove's guaranteed protection from injuries (1T. 1.2.178-181). Furthermore, Tamburlaine points to Zenocrate, the future queen whom Jove has directed to himself, the future "Monark of the East" (1T. 1.2.185). Jove has provided Tamburlaine with wealth, protection, and a queen besides. The manifestations of Jove's immediate interest in Tamburlaine's plans of warfare are a sure proof of successes to come in the eyes of Tamburlaine and very soon in the eyes of Theridamas as well. There remains to make Theridamas a partaker of this wealth and more to come and he is won. Tamburlaine's promises are made to sound convincing partly on the strength of the divine power supporting them. Earthly gains of every description sanctioned by divine help are used by Tamburlaine to win Theridamas to his cause.

Tamburlaine elaborates on the list of rewards in store; promises of power are added to the promises of wealth in return for Theridamas's full

participation in his campaigns (1T. 1.2.188ff.). Theridamas will share sovereignty with Tamburlaine, for "Then shalt thou be Competitor with me, / And sit with Tamburlaine in all his majestie" (1T. 1.2.208-209). Tamburlaine so skilfully plays on the weak strings of Theridamas's heart that the latter has to recognize the power of Tamburlaine's arguments (1T. 1.2.210-211). Furthermore, Tamburlaine is surrounded with witnesses to the infallible power attached to promises of wealth and lands to win followers. Techelles has already been won by similar arguments. He judges that possible rewards from Mycetes are a loss compared to what he is certain to have by Tamburlaine's victories:

> We are his friend, and if the Persean King
> Should offer present Dukedomes to our state,
> We thinke it losse to make exchange for that,
> We are assured of by our friends successe.
> (1T. 1.2.214-217)

Usumcasane equally anticipates similar gains: "And kingdomes at the least we all expect, / Besides the honor in assured conquestes" (1T. 1.2.218-219). Theridamas cannot resist the "stronge enchantments" (1T. 1.2.224) which entice his yielding soul, nor the example of "these resolved noble Scythians" (1T. 1.2.225), Tamburlaine's captains. He is moved to commit himself to Tamburlaine in an unconditional pledge of himself and his army as the following words show:

> Won with thy words, and conquered with thy looks,
> I yeeld my selfe, my men and horse to thee:
> To be partaker of thy good or ill,
> As long as life maintaines Theridamas.
> (1T. 1.2.228-230)

Theridamas renews this pledge later in the play (2T. 1.3.113-116). By then, he and Tamburlaine's captains or friends will all have been crowned "kings in Asia" (1T. 1.2.246). For Tamburlaine, like Mahomet, must be credited with keeping his promises. During the martial banquet given in honour of Bajazet's defeat, Tamburlaine crowns Theridamas King of Argier, Techelles King of Fesse, and Usumcasane King of Morocus (1T. 4.4.116-117). After his coronation and wedding feast, Tamburlaine exhorts his followers to take up

their rule in their respective provinces:

> And now my lords and loving followers,
> That purchac'd kingdomes by your martiall deeds,
> Cast off your armor, put on scarlet roabes.
> Mount up your royall places of estate,
> Environed with troopes of noble men,
> And there make lawes to rule your provinces.
> (1T. 5.1.522-527)

Wealth, crowns, lands, and kingdoms are the rewards for service on the battle-fields for both Mahomet and Tamburlaine. The theme of earthly rewards occurs again in the play[149] but never in so powerful terms nor with such spectacular results as when used by Tamburlaine.

As is evident in the study of the Tamburlaine-Theridamas relationship, the weight of spiritual rewards in store is insignificant in comparison with that of the earthly ones when it comes to the matter of luring followers into one's service. But throughout this scene, as in others, the presence of a heavenly power disposing and sanctioning these material gains is ever there. This is especially true in the scene when Tamburlaine sets about to turn Cosroe against his brother Mycetes, the Persian King. Perhaps, for the following reason, Tamburlaine soft-pedals the theme of earthly riches and emphasizes that of divine favours. Promises of gold and crown would have little persuasive power purely on their own merits for a ruler of vast lands or for a people who could afford to lavish wealth upon their soldiers as the following lines imply:

> Their plumed helmes are wrought with beaten golde,
> Their swords enameld, and about their neckes
> Hangs massie chaines of golde downe to the waste,
> In every part exceeding brave and rich.
> (1T. 1.2.124-127)

---

149. See the scene where Callapine uses similar means to obtain the collaboration of Almeda for his escape from Tamburlaine's captivity (2T. 1.2. See also the scene where Theridamas tries to win the heart of Olympia in ways similar to the ones Tamburlaine previously used to win Zenocrate: see 2T. 3.4.90-91; 4.2.39-45.

Tamburlaine has to strike a more sensitive chord to charm Cosroe into his line of action than that of material allurements. In this instance especially, Tamburlaine's methods evoke those of Mahomet. The founder of Islam assured those who would help him that they would be happy and blessed, that they were chosen by God to be his ministers and helpers.[150] An aura of divine favour accompanies Mahomet's supporters. Tamburlaine equally associates divine approval and attention with his collaborators as he explains to Cosroe:

> And so mistake you not a whit my Lord.
> For Fates and Oracles of heaven have sworne
> To roialise the deedes of Tamburlaine.
> And make them blest that share in his attemptes.
> (1T. 2.3.6-9)

It is interesting to note how Mahomet guarantees his followers that they will be successful because of the wickedness of the enemy, because of their own valiant courage, and, as he points out, because of "the most infallible oracles of Almightie God".[151] Tamburlaine offers advantages on the strength of these same oracles. Cosroe is won by Tamburlaine's words as the followers of Mahomet are won by his.

Mahomet promised his followers that if they persisted in faith, they would subdue innumerable nations and conquer most wealthy countries.[152] Tamburlaine warns Cosroe:

> And doubt you not, but if you favour me,
> And let my Fortunes and my valour sway,
> . . . . . .
> The world will strive with hostes of men at armes,
> To swarme unto the Ensigne I support.
> (1T. 2.3.10-14)

As may be expected, Tamburlaine's plans compare in scope with those of Islam;

---

150. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 6v.

151. See ibid.

152. See ibid.

both anticipate no less than a world-wide allegiance to their banner. One may note that promises of wealth and kingdoms are totally absent from this scene. These arguments would have been futile in the matter of winning the future King of Persia. The important step for Tamburlaine, at this stage, is to form an alliance with Cosroe, surely temporary in the mind of the Scythian warrior. For this reason probably, Tamburlaine refrains from committing himself or his men. Instead, he entices Cosroe with the prospects of huge armies and noisy battles in return for his support in Tamburlaine's initiatives.

Throughout these scenes, it would seem that earthly benefits are presented in the context of a divine plan in the same way that Moslems understood the rule and possession of the earth to be their privilege by divine decree and promise made to Abraham. It is interesting to note that Tamburlaine confiscates the wealth of the Egyptian train without any hesitation or suggestion that he might be unjust in doing so. These goods are his by right as any loot rightly belonged to a Moslem.[153] Thus, Tamburlaine and Mahomet display means of recruiting a following which are similar to a striking degree. One may question as to what alternative way there can be to entice followers other than by material rewards. Nevertheless, the emphasis placed almost exclusively on material gains is a strong contrast to the spiritual or religious mission these two leaders claim they are fulfulling while doing so.

Mahomet promises his men that they will "bee partakers of the kingdome of Heauen": Marlowe transmutes these promises into Tamburlaine's aspirations to "celestiall thrones" (1T. 1.2.237). Mahomet entices his men with prospects of great riches and honours in return for accepting him as their captain.[154] Newton adds that all his followers pledged themselves by a solemn oath.[155]

---

153. See above, p. 147 and n. 35.

154. Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 6 v.

155. See above, pp. 156-157.

Mahomet urged them to warlike valour, in return of which, riches, glory, renown, perpetual felicity would be granted them. According to Mahomet, these were the rewards set by God in return for their valiant service.[156] Much in this message recalls details about Tamburlaine such as they occurred in accounts of the Scythian's career which were in circulation during the sixteenth century. Was Marlowe confusing Mahomet's career with that of Tamburlaine which Newton relates elsewhere in his book?[157] The similarity between Mahomet's promises of riches and fame and those of Tamburlaine have sufficiently been dealt with above. As for the oath, it recalls that of Tamburlaine the youth of the chronicles exacting precisely the same kind of solemn promise from his associates.[158] Marlowe does not construct the full episode wherein Tamburlaine's followers are made to swear homage and fealty to their leader. However, this is implied in the scene in which Theridamas pledges his services to Tamburlaine. The solemnity of the moment can easily be detected from the content of Tamburlaine's answer.

> Theridamas my friend, take here my hand,
> Which is as much as if I swore by heaven,
> And call'd the Gods to witnesse of my vow,
> Thus shall my heart be still combinde with thine,
> Untill our bodies turne to Elements,
> And both our soules aspire celestiall thrones.
> (1T. 1.2.232-237)

At this time, Tamburlaine is only a captain and remains so until his victory with Cosroe over Mycetes and the Persians earns him the rank of regent of Persia and general lieutenant of the Persian armies. If such a pledge is made between Tamburlaine and his new recruit, one may suppose similar ones to have been previously made between Techelles, Usumcasane, and their leader.

---

156. See ibid., fol. 7.

157. See ibid., fol. 129.

158. See above, p. 103.

However, this is a minor detail and quite commonplace in such groups.

Thus a comparison between Mahomet, the man, and Marlowe's Tamburlaine has shown that the two leaders are similar in many ways. Both emerge from humble backgrounds and follow a similar pattern in their rise to power. Both assume they are entrusted with a divine mission which both pursue with an uncompromising singleness of purpose. The same worldly motives are used by both Mahomet and Tamburlaine to entice others to follow them. Marlowe alludes to Mahomet, to the legends attached to his name, and to the practices which Islam had developed to honour its founder in a way that constantly revives the Moslem world of Tamburlaine and its set of values in the minds of the audience. By means of these dramatic devices, Islamic motives and norms of ethics are consistenly implied in the play; they colour and determine to some extent the role of Tamburlaine and the setting in which he lives out his dramatic career. Is this resemblance intentional or accidental? Is it more apparent than real? Do the similarities simply emerge from the use of more or less conventional narrative patterns which might have been linked with specific themes? Or, did Marlowe, in search of details which would incarnate his dehumanized historical hero, seize upon the idea of presenting the Scythian warrior as a kind of second Mahomet and invest his dramatic personage with some of the characteristics provided by Newton's account of the career of the Prophet? If Marlowe meant to portray a Tamburlaine-Mahomet figure, then the dramatist may have forced the spectator to balance the worth of the saviour of Christendom, as history had described him and as he had lived on in Western legends, against the moral values of Mahomet or Islam, however despised these were by the Christian world. Little surprising that Marlowe would, in a detached and impersonal manner, invite the audience to applaud Tamburlaine's fortunes if they pleased.[159] If Tamburlaine was meant

---

159. "View but his picture in this tragicke glasse, / And then applaud his fortunes if you please": 1T. Pro. 7-8.

to be a second Mahomet, he could not help but be a most controversial character. If the similarities between Tamburlaine and Mahomet are valid and bear any weight in Marlowe's creation of his hero, then one might wonder whether Marlowe might be drawing upon the human and spiritual traits of Mahomet in order to build a hero of magnitude about whom history and legend left so many gaps. In this way, Tamburlaine could acquire deep spiritual significance and yet remain meaningful to an Elizabethan audience. Similarities between the image of the idealized Mahomet and the hero of the play might contribute even greater dimensions than the comparison of the two men at this stage of the analysis of their careers. Traits of the spiritual posthumous Mahomet and their possible implications might offer pertinent elements to the understanding of Tamburlaine as will be examined in some detail in the following section.

The story of Mahomet did not end with his death by any means nor do the similarities between Tamburlaine and Mahomet end here either. Legends tell us that Mahomet had assured his followers that he would live on forever. Should he experience death, he told them he would rise again.[160] Popular accounts relate how his enemies put his assertions to test by poisoning him and putting off his burial until his death was unquestionably ascertained.[161] If Mahomet failed to achieve physical immortality and enjoy re-animated resurrection, as he had said he would, nevertheless, he was to outlive the oblivion of the tomb. Time was to prove that "the messenger of God" did live on, if not in body, certainly in the powerful influence he continued to exercise through his teaching. Very soon after his death, study stimulated by popular religious feeling was to exalt the image of Mohammed into a deified ideal, everlasting and immortal.[162] Mohammed's apotheosis was to grow

---

160. See above, p. 158 and n. 93.

161. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 12, p. 59.

162. This posthumous identity held so powerful a sway over the minds of Islam that critics have come to speak of the double personality of

(continued overleaf.....)

beyond the bounds of historical facts[163] as Rodinson aptly describes in "Triumph over Death",[164] the last chapter of his biography of Mohammed. Several factors which were to bring this apotheosis about must be examined if the parallels drawn between Tamburlaine and Mahomet later in this study are to be meaningful.

An era of confusion followed the death of Mohammed.[165] He had left no provision for his successor.[166] As a result, rivalries and factions were rife, each group supporting its own body of opinions regarding the government of Church and State.[167] Discord forced these groups to examine what exactly made a man a member of the Islamic community and what would justify the rejection of one from their midst. Upon what elements was the essence of Islamism based? A core of authority, external to the contingencies of these struggles, had to be discovered. In other words, a new concept of the presence of the founder of Islam had to replace the dead Mohammed in order that the Prophet's authority might transcend the immediacy of the ever-changing problems and situations which his followers had to face. Furthermore, Islam had to defend its position against the impact of other religions which surrounded them and

---

162. Continued ..... Mohammed, perhaps as an analogy of Christ's two natures in one person. As a prophet, Mohammed certainly seemed to have a double personality. At one moment, his voice was the voice of God; at another, he was a disturbed human soul: see Macdonald, op. cit., n. 47, p. 32.

163. See Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. 88.

164. See Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, ch. 7.

165. See ibid., pp. 289 ff.

166. The survival of the Islam community, Mohammed's successor, the nature of the Moslem state: these were the problems which beset Islam after the death of its founder: see Macdonald, op. cit., n. 47, p. 7; Watt, op. cit., n. 26, pp. 7-8. Only a succession to Mohammed's temporal power was possible since his religious role as messenger and prophet of God depended on divine initiative and could not be passed on by any human arrangement: see ibid., p. 8. See also Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, p. 67. See also Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 289.

167. See Watt, op. cit., n. 26, pp. 131 ff.

against their claims to the superiority of their respective Holy Scriptures.[168] The texts of the Koran had to be proved superior in source, nature, and content to the Torah for the Jews and the Gospels for the Christians. Mohammed's greatness as a prophet had to be exalted beyond that of Moses and Christ.

Mohammed had been recognized as "the messenger of God" during his own lifetime. His message had been recorded in the Koran as the words of God.[169] The source of the Koranic words was the eternal Word. It was debated whether the Koranic words were eternal also;[170] at the very least, it could be assumed that these words had been uttered from the depths of eternity. Consequently, the next step was to extend in time the instrument[171] by which the Koranic words had been made known, and to conclude that, by rights, Mohammed should share to some extent the divine attribute of eternity. Thus, the logical conclusion could not be avoided: Mohammed also had existed before all time,[172] was even a part of the eternal Word of God,[173] an essential element in the

---

168. See ibid., pp. 132 ff.

169. See Macdonald, op. cit., n. 47, p. 24; see also below, p. 207, note 303.

170. See below, p. 207 and notes 308 and 309.

171. "Le prophète est responsable de l'exactitude mot-à-mot du message transmis: il en est le témoin et le premier": Gardet, op. cit. n. 44, p. 154. Le prophète est "cause instrumental serve (non-libre)": see ibid., p. 179. See also Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, p. 465.

172. See Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 223. Macdonald traces this belief to the Arian doctrine of the person of Christ: see op. cit., n. 47, p. 10; Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. vi; G.-C. Anawati, Mystique Musulmane: Aspects et tendances - Expériences et Techniques. (Paris, 1961), p. 66.

173. See below, pp. 188 ff., notes for the Scriptural texts upon which this doctrine is based. Nicholson sees an influence of Philo in the Moslem expositions of the doctrine of Mohammed as the Logos: see op. cit., n. 24, p. 138, n. 2. Macdonald says that "the influence of Greek theology on Islam can hardly be overestimated": see op. cit., n. 27, p. 132.

divine plan of all creation.[174] Consequently, the Logos doctrine, borrowed from the Christians who used it to explain the person of Christ[175] was applied to the identity of Mohammed.[176] Ibn 'Arabi,[177] the Spaniard (1165-1240), first expounded the tenets of this doctrine; his works were subsequently largely amplified in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by Moslem theologians and mystics. The ramifications were numerous; their effect was to dehumanize the historical image of Mohammed, to abstract the person of the Prophet from the coordinates of time and space, and to establish his spiritual transcendency over all except Allah himself. With this new perspective in view, scholars had to define the place of God, the relationship of God and the transcendent nature of Mohammed, the position of man and the world with respect to God and this transcendent "idea of Mohammed".[178] It is impossible to examine this Logos doctrine as it is applied to Mohammed in all its details; let it suffice for the purpose of this study to note its main points.

In the place of Christ, Mohammed now became the "first-born of all creation".[179] G.-C. Anawati analyses this doctrine from the ontological, mystical, and mythical points of view. Ontologically, the eternal Logos or Word is the Reality of all realities and the rational creative principle of the cosmos. The Logos is the hidden aspect of Divinity and precedes the world in time only logically. From the Logos, the Universe proceeds as a

---

174. See Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. 121. n. 5. See below, p. 188, n. 207.

175. See above, p. 183, n. 173. See below, pp. 188-189 and notes.

176. Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. 87; see also below, pp. 185 ff. See also Chew, op. cit., n. 9. p. 228.

177. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 149; Anawati, op. cit., n. 172, p. 59. Ibn 'Arabi exercised a strong influence on later mystical speculations: see Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. 88.

178. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 149.

179. See Louis Gardet, La Pensée religieuse d'Avicenne (Ibn Sina), (Paris, 1951), p. 113. See also Nicholson, op. cit., n.24, p. 87. Christ is called by the same terms in the Bible, he "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation": Col. 1:15.

particular of the universal. It is the source of the intelligible Ideas and of the Archetypes of the world in becoming. Man only (the Perfect Man not the physical man) manifests It synthetically; the inner knowledge which God has of himself reaches its summit in this Perfect Man. In this Man is realized the object of creation, which is the desire that God has to know himself. In the process of the descent of God into our capacity to know, the Logos is the first manifestation of God.

From the mystical point of view, the Logos expresses the Reality of Mohammed (not his form). He is the first Intellect, the universal rational principle. Each prophet is a Logos; but Mohammed is 'the' Logos.[180] All these 'Verba Dei' manifested in the prophets[181] come together in one only universal principle, which is the Spirit and the Reality of Mohammed, and the acting principle of all revelation or inspiration.[182] Ibn 'Arabi goes so far as to affirm the eternity of Mohammed as a cosmic principle.[183]

From the mythical point of view, the Logos as Perfect Man is the truest manifestation of God. As a proferred Logos, the Perfect Man is the mirror precisely reflecting God's perfections, perfections which are materialized and individualized in creation.[184] In other words, God and man are one in the Perfect Man; or, the Perfect Man is essentially one with the Divine Being in whose likeness he is made.[185]

---

180. See also above, pp. 184 and notes.

181. See Anawati, op. cit., n. 172, p. 59.

182. See ibid.

183. See ibid.

184. Anawati, op. cit., n. 172, p. 59. Nicholson says that "Mohammed, as the Logos, is the spiritual essence of Adam and of all things": op. cit., n. 24, p. 121.

185. See Anawati, op. cit., n. 172, pp. 58-59: Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, pp. 78 and 84.

Various authors express the tenets of the Logos doctrine in various ways. Of his very nature, the Perfect Man is both mediator between God and men and a cosmic power[186] on whom the world depends for its existence.[187] His "religious function as a mediator between man and God corresponds with his metaphysical function as the unifying principle by means of which the opposed terms of reality and appearance are harmonized".[188] "The created world is the outward aspect of that which in its inward aspect is God".[189] "Man, in virtue of his essence, is the cosmic Thought assuming flesh and connecting Absolute Being with the World of Nature".[190] "Man is the microcosm in which all attributes are united, and in him alone does the Absolute become conscious of itself in all its diverse aspects".[191] The Primal Man, the first-born of God, sinks into matter, works there as a creative principle.[192] Thus the essence of God in its self-consciousness becomes the Logos in whom is virtually contained all creation and whose expression is actualized in created beings. The Perfect Man or Logos is the axis on which the spheres of existence revolve from first to last.[193]

This Perfect Man is Lord Mohammed.[194] "He stands over against the Creator" and over the creatures.[195] "Mohammed is loved and adored as the per-

---

186. Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. 78.

187. Ibid.

188. Ibid.. pp. 84-85. See also Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 201.

189. See Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. 84. In other words, the universe is "reality as presented to itself through and in the cosmic consciousness of the Perfect Man, which holds all the attributes of reality together": see ibid., p. 92.

190. Ibid.. p. 84.

191. Ibid.. p. 84. See also ibid.. p. 110.

192. See ibid.. p. 86.

193. See ibid.. p. 105. "He becomes a pole (...) on which the entire universe revolves": ibid.. p. 111.

194. See Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, pp. 86 and 104. Hamidullah describes Mohammed as follows: "le plus digne, le plus parfait parmi les hommes": see op. cit., n. 44, p. 9.

195. Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. 104.

fect image or copy of God; 'he that has seen me has seen Allah'".[196] "The archetypal Spirit of Mohammed /is/ a mode of the uncreated Holy Divine Spirit and ... the medium through which God becomes conscious of Himself in creation".[197] Mohammed, the Perfect Man of pre-eternity, is a prototype or an archetype not only of all men, but also of all creation and from whom all creation emanates through the faydh, a creative flux itself emanating from God.[198] Because of his pre-excellence as a prophet, Mohammed becomes "the first-born of creation".[199] "Everything, the heavens, the earth, the angels, men, jinns, was created from the spirit or mind, the soul, the heart, the flesh of Mohammed".[200] Jili, a Moslem poet, could address Mohammed as "centre of the compass"[201] of the universe, the "eye of the entire circle of existence".[202] It could be said of Mohammed, "He is the heaven and the earth and the length and the breadth".[203] His "kingdom is in both worlds".[204] Guillaume summarizes the Logos doctrine in the following words based on the works of Ibn 'Arabi:

> The idea or reality of Muhammad, ... is the creative, animating, and rational principle of the universe, the first intellect; he is the reality of realities whose manifestation is in the perfect man. Every prophet is a Logos whose individual Logoi are united in the idea of Muhammad. The perfect man is he in whom all the attributes of the macrocosm are reflected. The reality of Muhammad is the creative principle of the universe, and the perfect man is its cause.[205]

---

196. Ibid., pp. 87-88. These words were probably inspired by the following passage: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father": John 14:9.

197. Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. 110.

198. See Anawati, op. cit., n. 172, p. 66; Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, pp. 87 and 106; Macdonald, op. cit., n. 47, p. 226.

199. See above, p. 184, n. 179 and p. 188, n. 207.

200. Gardet, op. cit., n. 179m p. 113, quoted in Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 306.

201. Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. 86.

202. Ibid., p. 87.

203. Ibid., p. 107.

204. Ibid.

205. Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 149.

In the light of the above statements, Mohammed becomes the sum of all creation; God made all things for him,[206] and one may add, in him and through him.[207] Except that Mohammed was "not quite co-equal and co-eternal" with God, there could be no limit to his glorification.[208] Mohammed was nothing less than a demi-god.[209]

Parallel with the doctrine of the Logos, ran the one of the "light of Mohammed"[210] used to explain the relationship between Mohammed and creation in terms of light. Rúh, the angel of light or the archetypal Spirit of Mohammed, was created from God's own light[211] and, from the Light of Mohammed, God created the whole world.[212] God made Mohammed his organ of vision in the world.[213] Mohammed was "the axis (...) of the sphere of created things",[214] the axis "on which the spheres of existence revolve from first to last".[215]

---

206. See Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, pp. 86 and 107. See following note.

207. Perfect Man or Mohammed is "the final cause of creation": see Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. 86. Allah is made to declare to Mohammed: "Had it not been for thee, I had not created the worlds": Macdonald, op. cit., n. 47, p. 10. The same idea is found in the following Pauline text speaking of Christ: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, whether they be thrones, ... - all things were created by him, and for him; / And he is before all things, and by him all things consist": Col. 1:16, 17. See also John 1:3.

208. See Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. 88.

209. Gardet, op. cit., n. 179, p. 113.

210. Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 183; Anawati, op. cit., n. 172, p. 66.

211. An Egyptian mystic is supposed to have recorded some traditions which were current about Mohammed as the light of the universe: see Rodinson, op. cit , n. 22, p. 304. Mohammed is supposed to have said: "The first light which Allah created was my light". See also Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. 110.

212. See Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, pp. 110 and 115.

213. See ibid., p. 110

214. See ibid. See also above, p. 186 and n. 193.

215. Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. 105.

"From the reflection (...) of Mohammed God created the spirits of the celestial and terrestial angels, and appointed them to guard the higher and lower spheres of existence until the Last Day".[216] Through Rúh, Mohammed "exercises a Divine guardianship, created in him by God, over the whole universe".[217] God is reported to have said to the "Idea of Mohammed", 'Thou art the Sun by whose radiance the full-moon of perfection is replenished'.[218] In short, the light of Mohammed emanated from God in pre-eternity, before all creation, and in it, all creation participated, according to a series of decreasing emanations.[219]

One can readily detect a strong Christian influence in the Logos doctrine. Several similar statements are made about Christ in the Gospel of John[220] and in the Epistles of Paul.[221] The doctrine of the "light of Mohammed" recalls Neoplatonic theories about God being pure light emanating through all degrees of created beings.[222] The Moslems equally had their

---

216. See ibid., p. 118.

217. See ibid. pp. 110. See also ibid., p. 118.

218. See ibid., p. 113. See also ibid., p. 115,

219. See Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 183.

220. The Logos doctrine used to explain the person of Christ was generally based on texts of John's Gospel. One of the best examples of these texts are the opening verses of that Gospel: "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. / The same was in the beginning with God. / All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made": 1:1-3. Another text was the following: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth": ibid., 1:14. See also Watt, op. cit., n. 26, p.134.

221. Pauline texts on Christ as the word of God are not so straightforward. Paul rather develops the theme of Christ as the Word of God expressed through all creation: see especially Col. 1:15-19.

222. The Arabs were very early exposed to the influence of Plato and Aristotle. Two examples of this influence are the philosophical writings of Ibn Sina, or Avicenna, as he was known, and Ibn Khaldun. Platonic philosophy, as interpreted by Ficino, taught that all beings took their source in God symbolized as, or equated to, light. Creatures participated in that light in various degrees: see P.O. Kristeller, The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino, translated into English by Virginia Conant (New York, 1943), pp. 94 ff., 146 ff., especially pp. 231 ff.

somewhat obscure text from the Koran which gave rise to the most fantastic speculations[223] on the "light of Mohammed" doctrine. It ran as follows: "God is the light of heaven and earth. His light may be compared to a niche which contains a lamp, the lamp within glass, and the glass as it were a star of pearl".[224] In terms of the Logos doctrine, the theme of light was translated into the terms of "a thought within a thought within a thought".[225] Much could be said about Moslem theologians or muftis who developed at great length the spiritual identity of Mohammed as the Logos and the Light of the Universe and man. The understanding of the idealized Mohammed was the means by which one could acquire some perception, however slight, of the essence of God. In this sense, the role of Mohammed was much the same as that of Christ in Christian theology. Some Moslem scholars tended to elaborate a system by which the various components of the universe were literally read into the identity of Mohammed. One such work in Moslem theology was Echialle

---

223. See Echialle Mufti, Religion ou Theologie des Turcs (Bruxelles, 1707), sig. a iii. The anonymous author of the foreword qualifies these speculations as "jeux d'enfants" or "imaginations outrées": see sig. a iiv; as "plus ridicules et grossiers que dangereux": see ibid., sig. a iii. Chew says that the legend of the Prophet was connected with fantastic traditions: see op. cit., n. 9, pp. 438 ff. Sieur de Ryer describes his French translation of the Koran as follows: "Ce livre ... a esté expliqué par plusieurs Docteurs Mahometans, leur explication est aussi ridicule que le texte ... . Tu serras estonné que ces absurditez ayent infecté la meilleure partie du Monde, et avoueras que la connoissance de ce qui est contenu en ce Livre rendra cette Loy meprisable": quoted in ibid., p. 449. To bring to the attention of the public the absurdities of Mahomet and his doctrine was often the purpose of the editions of the Koran. See also Guillaume, op. cit., n. 35, p. 12.

224. Quoted from Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 65. The Koranic version, at least in modern editions, runs as follows: "God is the LIGHT of the Heavens and of the Earth. His Light is like a niche in which is a lamp - the lamp encased in glass - the glass, as it were, a glistening star": see Koran. ed. cit., n. 60, sura 24:35, pp. 446-447. Note that the expression "a star of pearl" has been changed into " a glistening star".

225. Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. 118.

Mufti's study.[226] According to its anonymous French translator,[227] Echialle was reputed to be one of the two most famous experts on the Moslem doctrine. In the foreword, this same French translator informs the reader that Echialle was an Arab, apparently one of the most learned and enlightened in Moslem law. He was held in high reverence by the Turks who preserved his writings and honoured his memory with a superb mausoleum.[228]

Echialle taught that God created the spirit or mind of Mahomet from a rare and precious pearl.[229] Later Echialle explains that God created a lamp from one red diamond and, in the twinkling of an eye, from this lamp having all its lustre and beauty, God made the face of Mahomet to which he gave a shape similar to that of the world, placing it in the centre of this previous lamp[230].... Mohammed was the "sum of all creation"; Allah had made all for Mohammed. Echialle, assigns the source of various beings in creation to corresponding parts of Mohammed's body. Thus, from Mohammed's head God created the angels; from his face, the heavens, the holy Koran, paradise, hell, the sun, the moon; from his chest, the great and minor prophets, the scholars, the martyrs, the wise; from his back, the majestic palace (possibly destined to Jesus)[231] suspended between the heavens and the earth,[232] the holy city of Jerusalem, the mosque; from his feet, the Orient and the Occident,.....[233] And so he goes on mapping creation on the microcosmic Perfect Man Mohammed.

---

226. See ibid.

227. See Echialle, op. cit., n. 223, sig. a ii.

228. See ibid., sig. a vi.

229. See ibid., Première Partie, p. 1.

230. See ibid., p. 5.

231. See ibid., Deuxième Partie, p. 76, n. (a).

232. See ibid., Première Partie, p. 5.

233. See ibid., Première Partie, pp. 3 ff.

Echialle equates Mohammed with the head of the world and specifies that the head is round.[234] One could go on with the findings of Echialle but how, as must be the inevitable question by now, does all this relate to the play Tamburlaine?

One wonders to what extent the Elizabethans were familiar with such doctrines. In the references used in this study, except for Echialle's treatise which was published long after Marlowe's days, one does not find direct allusions to doctrines like the ones mentioned above. But one does find many comments which reflect reactions to Moslem doctrines. These doctrines are repeatedly characterized as exaggerated works of the imagination, as ridiculous and childish notions, and as fantastic and absurd beliefs.[235] As a matter of fact, as was mentioned before,[236] the purpose of publishing the Koran and treatises about its content was often to expose Moslem beliefs to the reader's attention and thus provoke scorn and contempt for such a religion. With the constant travel to and from Moslem territories, one could quite safely suppose that many Elizabethans were familiar with some of these beliefs. One cannot help but wonder if Marlowe was not one of these Elizabethans. There are some traits in Tamburlaine which strongly suggest, those of the idealized image of Mohammed, the first ones pertaining to the physical appearance of Tamburlaine. These similarities could be additional proofs that Tamburlaine was modelled on Mahomet as was suggested before.[237]

There is a passage in the first part of Tamburlaine which has baffled more than one critic. It runs as follows:

> . . . Twixt his manly pitch,
> A pearle more worth than all the world is plaste:
> Wherein by curious soveraintie of Art,
> Are fixt his piercing instruments of sight:

---

234. See ibid., p. 9.

235. See above, p. 190, n. 223.

236. See above, p. 45, n. 50.

237. See above, pp. 159 ff., 174 ff., 180-181.

> Whose fiery cyrcles[238] beare encompassed
> A heaven of heavenly bodies in their Spheares,
> That guides his steps and actions to the throne
> Where honor sits invested royally.
> (1T, 2.1.11-18)

This passage obviously is part of Menaphon's description of Tamburlaine. Problems have arisen as to the meaning of the word "pearl" in these lines. Most of the critics have understood it as a synonym for the word "head".[239] However, U.M. Ellis-Fermor is not satisfied with this usual explanation. She says: "This image seems hardly happy, but there equally seems no other interpretation than that of Dyce; the pearl is the head".[240] From what has been said above about the mind of Mohammed coming into being from a rare and precious pearl, is it too hazardous to suggest that Marlowe might have been borrowing the image of Mahomet's mind and its cosmic significance to describe his hero? If so, Marlowe's estimate of the worth of that pearl to be "greater than all the world" would be most significant. Mohammed, as the first-born of all creation, held creation within his spirit; his spirit, or Tamburlaine's as a second Mohammed, would, thereby, become all inclusive of and greater than all the universe. Mohammed was the sum of all creation; so would Tamburlaine be. Furthermore, Marlowe has included lines to this effect elsewhere in his play.[241]

---

238. Hamidullah notes that Mohammed's eyeballs were covered with red lines ("avec le globe remplis [sic] de lignes rouges") whatever that may mean: see op. cit., n. 44, p. 54. Would this detail account for Tamburlaine's "fiery eyes"?

239. See Alexander Dyce, ed., The Works of Christopher Marlowe: with Some Account of the Author and Notes (London, 1859), p. 13, n.; Jump, ed. cit., n. 106, p. 25, n.; J.W. Harper, ed., Tamburlaine (London, 1971), p. 25, n.; Irving Ribner, ed., Christopher Marlowe's 'Tamburlaine', Part One and Part Two: Text and Major Criticism (New York, 1974), p. 16, n. All the above editors equate the word "pearl" with "head".

240. See U.M. Ellis-Fermor, ed., Tamburlaine the Great in Two Parts (London, 1930), p. 93, n.

241. See below, pp. 196-197.

The lines about Tamburlaine's eyes are equally mystifying. Ellis-Fermor once more is none too happy with her interpretations of them. She explains lines 15-16 as follows: "I find difficulty in following Marlowe's metaphor here. Apparently the circles of Tamburlaine's eyes contain within their compass such compulsive power as is equivalent to a universe of propitious stars leading him to the throne by their influence".[242] She reduces these lines to a comparison between "the compulsive power" in Tamburlaine's eyes and that of a universe of stars leading him to kingship. John D. Jump attempts no more than a paraphrase of the lines. He says that Tamburlaine's eyes, "of which the blazing orbs enclose a whole universe of stars and planets in their various spheres, [were] propitiously disposed to cause him to gain the throne".[243] J.W. Harper has this to say on these lines: "The glowing spheres of his eyes reveal a constellation of stars and planets propitious of his gaining the throne".[244] Irving Ribner offers a similar explanation: "Within his eyes there shines a constellation of such propitious stars as might cause him to attain the throne. (All human events were believed to be influenced by the stars)".[245] What did Marlowe have in mind when he enclosed "a heaven of heavenly spheres" in Tamburlaine's eyes. Once more, one might remember Mohammed's place in creation as it is described above.[246] Everything, the heavens, the earth, angels, etc., were made of the spirit, the soul, the heart, the flesh of Mohammed. Echialle is more specific.[247] From Mohammed's head or spirit came the angels; from his face, the heavens,....

---

242. Ellis-Fermor, ed. cit., n. 240, p. 93, n.

243. Jump, ed. cit., n. 106, p. 25.

244. Harper, ed. cit., n. 239, p. 25.

245. Ribner, ed. cit., n. 239, p. 16.

246. See above, pp. 184 ff.; p. 188, n. 207.

247. See above, pp. 190 ff.

If Tamburlaine is meant to be a second Mahomet, one may not be too surprised to find lines suggesting Tamburlaine as the sum or source of all creation, that from his head, in particular, had sprung the heavens or, more precisely the heavenly spheres. Furthermore, should some of the fantastic ideas already mentioned about the idealized Mohammed have reached Marlowe, and who can prove that they did not, then the notion of Tamburlaine's eyes encompassing "a heaven of heavenly bodies in their Spheares" may become all the more meaningful. The idealized Mohammed was described as the "eye of the entire circle of existence".[248] "Circle of existence" could be interpreted in terms of a full span of time or in terms of the full array of existing beings. However, if this circle or scale of existence is extended into cosmic proportions, then the circle is the encompassing whole or "the entire circle" of the sphere of the universe of which Mohammed was the eye, or the centre. Transposed into the context of the Renaissance theories presenting the universe as a series of concentric spheres, Mohammed then could become the eye of the circle of existence or of the "heaven of heavenly bodies" or spheres. In the same way, Tamburlaine, as a new incarnation of the idealized Mohammed, could hold the universe in his fiery eyes. Another way of expressing the notion of Mohammed as the eye of the world was the definition of Mohammed as God's "organ of vision in the world".[249] God and, therefore, man perceived the universe in and through the eye of Mohammed. Mohammed's eye became the point through which the universe made itself real to God and visible to man. Thus, as Mohammed's eye contained the universe or "the heaven of heavenly bodies", so did Tamburlaine, as a re-creation of the idealized Mohammed,[250] also hold the universe in his eyes. To hold that Marlowe was familiar with these theories about the deified Mohammed and that he was influenced by them

---

248. See above, p. 187.

249. See above, p. 188.

250. See below, pp. 216 ff.

when he wrote his play is perhaps begging the question, but nevertheless, these lines become fully meaningful if they are read within the context of the Moslem doctrines about the founder and the subsequent leaders of Islam. These lines, as do others of Marlowe's play, seem to suggest that Tamburlaine was possibly modelled on Mohammed, the archetype of man and of Islamic leaders. To present the spheres in Tamburlaine's eyes as masters of human destinies was to add a Renaissance touch to Moslem theories about the cosmic universe. Besides, eyes express one's spirit; therefore, one may quite naturally find there "a heaven of heavenly bodies" or spheres which had already sprung from the spirit of Tamburlaine, as the heavens had sprung from Mohammed's face. E.M.W. Tillyard speaks of "another powerful and persistent piece of Platonism" which "had to do with the angels who were supposed to direct the turning of the sphere in the physical universe".[251] The influence of the planets or the stars on one's destiny was commonplace for an Elizabethan. Thus Tamburlaine, Mohammed and the angels would enjoy similar powers over man and the universe. As a second Mahomet, Tamburlaine would be both source and control of the heavenly spheres, at the same time guiding and being guided towards the realization of his ambitions. All the more reason for Tamburlaine to be justified in his boast of holding Fortune in his hand, of mastering his destiny (1T. 1.2.174-175). Little surprising that Tamburlaine hoped to "moove the turning Spheares of heaven" (2T. 4.1.118).

If the above is accepted, the conclusion is that creation exists through Tamburlaine as it did through Christ and then Mahomet.[252] There is a line in the play which suggests as much about Tamburlaine. The Virgins of Damascus address him as the "Image of Honor and Nobilitie / For whome the Powers divine have made the world" (1T. 5.1.75-76). "For whom the powers divine have made the world": these words used to flatter Tamburlaine recall the ones St. Paul used to explain the place of Christ with respect to creation and

---

251. E.M.W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture (London, 1943), pp. 43-44.

252. See above, pp. 184 ff.

which the followers of Islam had adopted to define the cosmic dimension of Mohammed.[253] Were the Elizabethans aware that Marlowe's lines inferred in the person of Tamburlaine the two religious presences of Christ and Mahomet? Marlowe reaffirms the idea of the presence of Tamburlaine as extending into all of creation in the following words. Tamburlaine yearns to

> . . . . . moove the turning Spheares of heaven,
> For earth and al this aery region
> Cannot containe the state of Tamburlaine.
> (2T. 4.1.118-120)

The earth and the heavens have become too small for Tamburlaine. While the "idea of Mohammed" could embody the heavens and the earth, Tamburlaine's spiritual dimensions have outgrown the boundaries of creation and, at the same time, the spiritual dimensions of Mohammed. Has Tamburlaine extended himself into a cosmic figure?

Analogies between the "light of Mohammed" doctrine and the "light of Tamburlaine" theme could be construed quite easily. According to this doctrine, Mohammed was the sun whose light replenished the moon and from whom the whole universe emanated.[254] The Tamburlaine-figure is also presented in terms of light. Early in the play when he first appears on the stage, Tamburlaine explains his plans of conquest in terms of the circuit of the sun "Measuring the limits of his Emperie / By East and West, as Phoebus doth his course" (1T. 1.2.39-40). Later after the defeat of Bajazet, the triumphant Tamburlaine can find no better means of measuring his greatness than by using the sun-image metaphor as he does in the following lines:

> For I the chiefest Lamp of all the earth,
> First rising in the East with milde aspect,
> But fixed now in the Meridian line,
> Will send up fire to your turning Spheares,
> And cause the Sun to borrowe light of you.
> (1T. 4.2.36-40)

---

253. Cf. Col. 1:16-17.

254. See above, pp. 188-189.

The Tamburlaine-sun has measured his course and become fixed in the zenith, the highest point of the heavens, where its light is necessarily the brightest. Tamburlaine can boast of imparting light to the spheres, of sending fire to the stars that have guided him to this victory, that they, in their turn, may lend their light to the sun of the physical universe.[255] In this light relationship, Zenocrate shares her husband's prerogatives to some extent; she also imparts light to the lamps of the heavens (2T. 2.4.1-14, 49-54). The Marlovian sun-image metaphor is sustained throughout the play; references to the sun itself, and to related figures of mythology like Apollo, Icarus, and Phaeton are very numerous. Mary Ellen Rickey[256] and Sanford Sternlicht[257] have analysed this imagery in the two parts of the play in which, according to them, Tamburlaine is literally a personification of the sun-god. Perhaps the sun-metaphor used to describe the glory of kings and emperors was rather commonplace in the days of Elizabeth. Wolfgang H. Clemens says that in Elizabethan drama, "solar images traditionally radiate from kings".[258] Elizabethans resorted to this literary device to sing the praises of their queen, Whetstones being one of these. In an anagram of the words "Elizabetha Regina", he addresses Elizabeth as "Light of the West, which through the world is seene", as "the meruaile of this time" whom "the world cannot contayne".[259] Elizabeth's countenance resembles "a bright sunne, shadowed with no manner of cloudes".[260] Whetstones believes that "yet sure a royall Prince resembleth

---

255. See ibid. Also 1T. 4.2.34-40.

256. See Mary Ellen Rickey, "Astronomical Imagery in 'Tamburlaine'", Renaissance Meeting in the Southeastern States. Renaissance Papers. A Selection of Papers Presented (Durham, N.C., 1954) pp. 63-70.

257. See Sanford Sternlicht, "Tamburlaine and Interative [sic] Sun-Image", English Record. 16(1966), pp. 23-29.

258. Wolfgang H. Clemens, The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), p. 28, quoted in Sternlicht, op. cit., n. 257, p. 23.

259. Whetstones, op. cit., n. 12, p. [ii].

260. Ibid., p. 164.

The Tamburlaine-sun has measured his course and become fixed in the zenith, the highest point of the heavens, where its light is necessarily the brightest. Tamburlaine can boast of imparting light to the spheres, of sending fire to the stars that have guided him to this victory, that they, in their turn, may lend their light to the sun of the physical universe.[255] In this light relationship, Zenocrate shares her husband's prerogatives to some extent; she also imparts light to the lamps of the heavens (2T. 2.4.1-14, 49-54). The Marlovian sun-image metaphor is sustained throughout the play; references to the sun itself, and to related figures of mythology like Apollo, Icarus, and Phaeton are very numerous. Mary Ellen Rickey[256] and Sanford Sternlicht[257] have analysed this imagery in the two parts of the play in which, according to them, Tamburlaine is literally a personification of the sun-god. Perhaps the sun-metaphor used to describe the glory of kings and emperors was rather commonplace in the days of Elizabeth. Wolfgang H. Clemens says that in Elizabethan drama, "solar images traditionally radiate from kings".[258] Elizabethans resorted to this literary device to sing the praises of their queen, Whetstones being one of these. In an anagram of the words "Elizabetha Regina", he addresses Elizabeth as "Light of the West, which through the world is seene", as "the meruaile of this time" whom "the world cannot contayne".[259] Elizabeth's countenance resembles "a bright sunne, shadowed with no manner of cloudes".[260] Whetstones believes that "yet sure a royall Prince resembleth

---

255. See ibid. Also 1T. 4.2.34-40.

256. See Mary Ellen Rickey, "Astronomical Imagery in Tamburlaine", Renaissance Meeting in the Southeastern States, Renaissance Papers. A Selection of Papers Presented (Durham, N.C., 1954) pp. 63-70.

257. See Sanford Sternlicht, "Tamburlaine and Interative [sic] Sun-Imago", English Record. 16(1966), pp. 23-29.

258. Wolfgang H. Clemens, The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), p. 28, quoted in Sternlicht, op. cit., n. 257, p. 23.

259. Whetstones, op. cit., n. 12, p. [ii].

260. Ibid., p. 164.

the sunne, whose bright beames comforteth euery creature, and being darkened with stormie clouds, spreadeth heauinesse vpon the whole earth".[261] Traitors plotting against Elizabeth, contrive "to extinguishe the lyght of that Sunne, whereon their feared consciences wyll not suffer them to looke".[262] Marlowe's use of the sun-metaphor to describe Tamburlaine was possibly part of the Elizabethan tradition. It was an essential part of the cosmic imagery used to define Tamburlaine.

Marlowe expands this cosmic imagery considerably. Tamburlaine compares himself to Phaeton who "almost brent the Axeltree of heaven" (1T. 4.2.50); Mohammed also controlled the axes of the universe.[263] Tamburlaine's attack against Bajazet is described in terms of lightning:

> My sword stroke fire from his coat of steele,
> . . . . . .
> As when a fiery exhalation
> Wrapt in the bowels of a freezing cloude,
> Fighting for passage, makes the Welkin cracke,
> And casts a flash of lightning to the earth.
> (1T. 4.2.41, 43-46)

and he fills the air "with fiery meteors" (1T. 4.2.52). Tamburlaine has caused showers to fall:

> And here in Affrick where it seldom raines,
> Since I arriv'd with my triumphant hoste,
> Have swelling cloudes drawen from wide gasping woundes,
> Bene oft resolv'd in bloody purple showers.[264]
> (1T. 5.1.457-460)

"With the thunder of his martial tooles", Tamburlaine "Makes Earthquakes in the hearts of men and heaven" (2T. 2.2.7-8). One could go on quoting

---

261. Ibid., p. 207.

262. A.M., A Watch-woord to Englande to Beware of Traytours and Tretcherous practises. ... (London. 1584). sig. A ii v.

263. See above, p. 186 and n. 193; p. 188.

264. For instances of showers of blood, see Aenius Syluius, Magistrum huius operis libri cronicarum ac figuris et ymaginibus ab inicio mundi: (Nuremburg, 1493), fol. LXXXII v, CLXXI, CXCVIII, etc.

passages which show Tamburlaine using and fashioning nature according to his own tastes. These passages display Tamburlaine's power over the universe and develop the cosmic proportions of Marlowe's hero. Was the dramatist extending the dimensions of his hero into those of a cosmic figure in the same way that the spiritualized Mohammed had been defined as a "cosmic thought"?[265] Did Marlowe wish to evoke the cosmic Mohammed or the cosmic Christ of Pauline literature, or both?

The doctrines used to explain the idealized Mohammed defined him, first and foremost, as an essentially religious figure. It may be pointed out once more that any links which the Elizabethans might detect between Mohammed and Tamburlaine would contribute to characterize the latter as a religious leader or warrior. As the play progresses, it must be noted, Tamburlaine becomes more and more religious as the messenger of the Highest (2T. 5.1.92), an image or expression of God in whom one may detect the "note of Majesty" (2T. 5.3. 38) of God. Such attributes are not far removed from the privilege of being a Word of God or a "light" or a "first-born" of God as Mohammed was credited to be.

In order that the Elizabethan image of Mohammed be complete, the reverse facet of it must be noted. Again, it resembles that of Tamburlaine. While the fantastic traditions initiated by Moslem theologians and mystics had glorified the founder of their faith beyond all human proportions, the prestige of Mohammed had moved in quite the opposite direction in the mind of Western Christians.[266] As military campaigns against Islam increased in number, its founder, by reputation, became "barbarous Mahumet, with his filthy Alcoran",[267]

---

265. See above, pp. 186 ff. and notes.

266. Legends and lies about Mahomet and his followers were current. There had grown "a confused and contradictory mass of grotesque notions about the Founder of Islam": see Chew, op. cit., n. 9, pp. 387 ff. and n. 1.

267. John Foxe, quoted in Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 132.

a lover of war,[268] a symbol of strife. Sir Walter Ralegh claimed that the very name Mahomet "in the Arabique signifies Indignation or Furie";[269] incidentally, a description quite suited to Tamburlaine. Morally, Mahomet's opposition to Christian beliefs damned him. He was a devil[270] or Satan, more evil than Beelzebub[271] for whom it was quite impossible to invent heresies worse than the beliefs propounded by Mahomet's doctrine. He was a personification of the heresiarch of the worst kind.[272] His name became an expression of abuse conveniently directed against heretics by zealous Christians out to defend the orthodoxy of the Church doctrine. Wycliffe and Martin Luther had the distinction of being "Mahomets" to some.[273] Like Satan, Mahomet was the

---

268. Mahomet's law was considered to be dependent upon the sword: see Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 443.

269. Sir Walter Ralegh, The Life and Death of Mahomet, The Conquest of Spaine Together with the Rysing and Ruine of the Sarazen Empire (London, 1637), p. 1

270. See Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 2, p. 104, n. 116. Mahomet's work was considered to be the work of the devil or Satan: see Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 115 and n. 1; also, for Turks as incarnate devils, see ibid., p. 141. Some of the literature of Marlowe's time equates Mahomet with the devil: see ibid., p. 389, n. 1. Mahomet was "in reality a juggling fiend who by false promises lures his followers to destruction": according to Robert Greene, Alphonsus King of Arragon, quoted in ibid., p. 396. "Mahomet was a perverse instrument of schism operating by diabolical inspiration": ibid., p. 397.

271. "The sect of Mahomet, which his accursed head first planted in Arabia, hath left an impossibility to Belzabub to scatter in the world, a more blasphemy against God, and iniury towardes men, whose opinions buried millions of soules in hell, whose bodies were to forme, many hundred yeeres after his departure vnto the Diuell": Whetstones, op. cit., n. 12, p. 56.

272. See Chew, op. cit., n. 9, pp. 388 and 397; see also n. 271 above.

273. See Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 101, n. 1. So was the Pope identified with Mahomet and the Turks: see ibid., pp. 101 ff., and p. 101, n. 1. "The Turke is to God an enimie, and the Pope is to God a traitor: A.M., op. cit., n. 262, fol. 39.

seducer of the world,[274] holding synagogues,[275] involved with magic, negromancy,[276] and the black arts. He is repeatedly referred to as the false prophet,[277] an impostor,[278] a fraud,[279] in Renaissance literature. By extension, any object carrying a possible odium of mysterious evil was of the Saracens or the Turks.[280] There even existed the legend of Mahomet the idol,[281] which Marlowe introduced in his play, and of the "mahometries"[282] practised in the cult of this idol. In short, the popular image of Mahomet in Europe was anything but flattering. It had nothing edifying or inspiring and suggested in no way the veneration which the Moslems had for "the idea of Mohammed".

Contrary to the practice of some contemporary dramatists,[283] Marlowe does not join in this vituperative chorus directed against the founder of Islam. If Tamburlaine was to be at the same time a hero for Christendom and

---

274. Knolles, op. cit., n. 12, p. 22.

275. Jews and Turks were enemies common to Christendom and, hence, the confusion about their customs.

276. See Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 398. Wynkyn de Worde's tract published in 1515 spoke of Mahomet in such terms: see ibid., p. 441. See also Whetstones, op. cit., n. 12, p. 57.

277. See Fortescue, op. cit., n. 12, fol. 28. See also Syr Dauid Lindsey, A Dialogue betweene Experience and a Courtier, of the miserable state of the Worlde ... (London, 1581), fol. 79; Chew, op. cit., n. 9, pp. 398 and 406, n. 3; Knolles, op. cit., n. 12, Induction to the Christian Reader, (unpaginated), and p. 3; Ralegh, op. cit., n. 269, p. 25.

278. See Chew, op.cit., n. 9, p. 406; Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 2, p. 104, n. 116.

279. See Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 398.

280. No clear-cut distinction was made between Turks and Saracens: see Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 104. Lutherans and Calvinists were associated with the Turks by Roman Catholics as the latter were associated with Turks by Protestants: see ibid., pp. 101-102, and p. 101, n. 1.

281. See below, pp. 272, 304 ff., and p. 304, n. 203.

282. See Chew, op. cit., n. 9, pp. 391 and 395.

283. See ibid., p. 389, n. 1; p. 391, n. 1, and p. 395.

the Moslem world, the most antagonism he could display against Mahomet was a silent indifference to him. This is the strategy which Marlowe seems to follow during most of the play until Tamburlaine chooses to treat Mahomet as an idol.[284] There was all the more reason to treat Mahomet with a minimum of respect if Marlowe intended to present Tamburlaine as some kind of second or revived Mahomet. Curiously enough, however, Tamburlaine is the one who is reviled in the play as was Mahomet by the Christians. Did Marlowe have Mahomet's image as an evil agent in mind when he made Tamburlaine's enemies describe their foe as a devil or as an evil presence (1T.4.1.42; 2.6.1, 20)?

Thus, the allusions to Mahomet and to the legends and devotional practices connected with him fulfil a definite function in the play. While they create a Moslem context for an action which unfolds itself in Islamic regions, they also help to define Marlowe's hero. Tamburlaine seems to reproduce in many respects the popular image of the Prophet. Tamburlaine also seems to impersonate the spiritual dimension of the founder of Islam. The interplay between the stage character of Tamburlaine and the image of Mahomet which is recalled by the frequent allusions to Mahomet, probably helped to explain what Marlowe's hero was, and was not, with respect to the Islamic faith. There remains more to be said on the presence and role of Mahomet in the play but some consideration must first be given to other aspects of Islam, the place and importance of the Koran being the next point to examine.

---

284. See below, pp. 316 ff.

II

If Mahomet, the founder of Islam, deserved all the attention he was given in the previous section, the substance of the faith which he bequeathed to his followers deserves more than just a glance. As was the case for the founder, so the creed or the Koran must be examined from two different angles, that of the Moslem theologian or mystic as opposed to that of the popular opinions held about this sacred book of Islam. To a devout Moslem, the Koranic text[285] was the word of God himself expected to supply all the answers a faithful Moslem might need in the events of his daily life.[286] Its content and its continued widespread influence made it the miracle of Mohammed, the great miracle of Islam.[287] To the enemies of Islam, the Koran was the collection of heresies and devilish doctrines.

In the course of time, Mohammed's messages from the archangel Gabriel, which he had been forced to repeat or recite, had been carefully written down and had become known as "The Recitation",[288] or the Koran as it is currently known today.[289] As was mentioned before, the importance of this sacred text cannot be over-estimated;[290] it is the life or spirit of Islam. The book was

---

285. Scholars affirm that Mohammed is unquestionably the author of the Koran: see Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, pp. 107-108. The doctrine of the Koran uncreated, or literally, the word of God was not finally established until the third century of the hijra: see Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 160. See also Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, p. 10.

286. See Margoliouth, op. cit., n. 47, p. 22; Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 241. Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 88.

287. See Pierre Vattier, L'Histoire dv Grand Tamerlan divisée en sept livres contenant l'origine, la vie, et la mort de ce fameux Conquérant, ... (Paris, 1658), p. 111; Margoliouth, op. cit., n. 47, p. 22; Macdonald, op. cit., n. 47, p. 52; Guillaume, op. cit., n. 35, pp. 133-134.

288. See Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, p. 9; Guillaume, op. cit., n.22, p. 59.

289. See above, pp. 183 ff.

290. See Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 114; Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 146.

revered[291] all the more for the fact that it was a revelation given by God specifically destined for the Arabs[292] as the Torah has been for the Jews and the New Testament for the Christians. In the eyes of the Arabs, the Koran was their own special book in spite of the fact that it contained many expressions borrowed from Hebrew and Syriac[293] and much material taken from the Bible. Like Mohammed, who had come to fulfil Jesus's promise of a Paraclete, so the Koran had been revealed to complete the teaching of God, as, again, had been promised by Jesus.[294] Moslems believed it had been sent to restore the message of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures alleged to have been corrupted since the days of their revelation.[295] The Koran was the culmination of divine Revelation in the same way that Mohammed was the last or the "Seal of the Prophets". The message of the Koran was therefore of universal value.[296]

---

291. The book is held "in the greatest reverence and esteem" among the Moslems who dare not "touch it without being first washed or legally purified". It is treated and used with the greatest respect. Moslems "swear by it, consult it in their weighty occasions, carry it with them to war, write sentences of it on their banners, adorn it with gold and precious stones, and knowingly suffer it not to be in the possession of any different persuasion": see Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 114. "There had grown up very early in the Muslim community an unbounded reverence and awe in the presence of the Qur'an": Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 146. George Sandys, in the course of one of his travels, was impressed by the reverence shown the book of the Koran: see Relation of a Journey (1615), pp. 53. ff., mentioned in Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 440.

292. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 62. This fact fostered the Arabs' pride in their own language: see Watt, op. cit., n. 26, p. 89.

293. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 62.

294. See ibid., p. 60; also above, p. 153 and n. 71.

295. See Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 123; Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, p. 20; Nicholson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 138; Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, p. 10; Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 63; see also above, pp. 153-154; p. 153, n. 71 and p. 155, n. 76.

296. See Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 241; Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 152; Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, pp. 10 and 422.

Its content is extremely enigmatic;[297] scholars are still at grips with the textual problems connected with it, the chronological sequence of its various chapters or suras being the most difficult one.[298] The book reflects the various influences to which Mohammed was exposed. It is a mixture of Old Testament stories taken from the Jewish Torah, of New Testament episodes taken from the Christians' Gospels, of tales drawn from the Apocryphas of the Old and New Testaments, and of doctrines assimilated from the heresies of the times.[299] The stories of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Job, Solomon, Jesus, with many variations and distortions, take up a considerable portion of the text.[300] In it, one can find the Islamic concepts about God, heaven, hell, and guidance of an ethical nature for the especially significant events in one's course of life.[301] The eight commandments of the Moslems,[302] rules about prayer and fast,

---

297. See Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. xi. The Koran "is far from being a systematic manual of theology": see Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, p. 16.

298. The chronological order of the content of the Koran has always posed serious textual problems: see Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 10-11. See also Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 59.

299. See Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 106. See also below, p. 148 and p. 153, notes 65, 66.

300. D. Sidersky in Les Origines des Légendes musulmanes dans le Coran et dans les vies des prophètes (Paris, 1933), has systematically analysed the sources from which Mohammed and the Moslem chroniclers probably drew their material. They are mainly the apocryphal texts of the Old Testament, the Aggadab of the Jews, the apocryphal texts of the New Testament. See also Arnold, op. cit., n. 76, pp. 18-29.

301. Islam has been throughout its history an essentially ethical religion with stress being persistently laid upon due performance of moral duties: see Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, p. 23. The guidance for those duties is basically drawn from the Koran: see also Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, pp. 106-107. The Koran continues to be "the source which provides the answers to all questions, and guidance for all difficulties": Margoliouth, op. cit., n. 47, p. 22.

302. See Chew, op. cit., n. 9, pp. 440 and 443-444.

the duties of the pilgrimage, and of the holy wars: all are laid down as the obligations to be met with by the faithful followers of Mahomet.

The Koran, as was mentioned above, is "the infallible word of God";[303] not subject to change[304] and, therefore, an article of faith[305] for the Moslems. It is literally believed to be "a transcript of a tablet preserved in heaven".[306] Anyone who would dare question the Koran must do so with caution for the sake of his own safety.[307] For a long time, a debate went on about whether the Koranic word was created or uncreated.[308] If the Koran was the word or expression of God, that word or expression had to be as eternal as God was himself.[309]

---

303. The Koran is "the absolute word of God": see Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 71. The words of the Koran were almost all direct words of God; it came to be called the word of God: see ibid., p. 146. See also Macdonald, op. cit., n. 47, p. 32: the prophet speaks directly to the people as their God. Echialle in "Troisième Partie, Profession de foi de Mahomet ..." says: "L'Alcoran est descendu directement du ciel": see op. cit., n. 223, p. 20. God caused a book to descend: see Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 2, p. 111, n. 152; also ibid., p. 213, n. 53; Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, p. 465; Margoliouth, op. cit., n. 47, pp. 10-11; Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 55. The Koran was considered to be "the actual speech of God": see Watt, op. cit., n. 26. p. 89. See also below, notes 306, 307, 308 and 309.

304. The subject of the Koran is eternal truth not subject to change: see Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1. Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 106.

305. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 55.

306. The Koran was originally "written on a table of vast bigness, called the Preserved Table", a copy of which on paper was brought down by the Angel Gabriel: see Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 108. See also Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 55 and 59; Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, p. 10.

307. "In Islam the doctrine of the infallible word of God is an article of faith, and the few who have questioned it have for the most part expressed their doubts in enigmatic language, so as to leave themselves a way of retreat from a dangerous position": Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 55.

308. Moslems claim "it is eternal and uncreated, remaining, as some express it, in the very essence of God": Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, pp. 108 and 111. See also Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, p. 465. The problem led to all sorts of theological disputes: see Watt, op. cit., n. 26, pp. 131-132.

309. The Koran is "the Word of God, co-eternal with God, and communicated both in language and meaning, through divine inspiration, to the last of the Prophets, Muhammad": See Arnold, op. cit., n. 76. p. 38. See

(continued overleaf.....)

If this proposition was carried through to its ultimate meaning, then there were two eternal beings[310] and the Koranic word became a god itself opening the door to polytheism.[311] On the other hand, the word or expression of God of necessity must share the divine attributes of God, the principal ones being eternity and infinity. Therefore, the Koran must have something divine about it. Whichever position one chose to defend, one could never come to a clear-cut solution.[312] As may be expected, the debates on this subject and its applications in the concrete problems of life, and the stands taken by various defendants, led to a proliferation of sects, each with its own traditions.[313] If the Koran was so divine, the case of making it an idol was the next easiest and most logical step to be taken.[314] One can readily suspect how this theme fed the imaginations of the enemies of Islam, in particular those of the Christians.[315]

---

309. continued..... also Macdonald, op. cit., n. 47, p. 26; Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, p. 465. Moslem piety held that the Koran was uncreated and had existed from all eternity with God. "So, in correspondence with the heavenly and uncreated Logos in the bosom of the Father, there stands this uncreated and eternal Word of God; to the earthly manifestation in Jesus corresponds the Qur'an the Word of God which we read and recite": Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 146. See also ibid., p. 148. See also above, p. 207 and notes 304, 308.

310. The heresy most derided was that of giving God a partner: see Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, p. 5; also Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 112.

311. Some Moslem ascetic "flatly damned as unbelievers all who held the eternity of the Qur'an; they had taken unto themselves two Gods": Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 152.

312. Al Ghazali reconciled these divergent opinions by "saying that the Qur'an is read and pronounced with the tongue, written in books, and kept in memory; and is yet eternal, subsisting in God's essence, and not possible to be separated thence by any transmission into men's memories or the leaves of books": in Wherry op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 112.

313. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, ch. 6.

314. See Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 389, n. 1; see also below, pp. 319-320.

315. See below, pp. 319-320 and p. 319, n. 255.

Indeed, the Koran was no happier in its reputation than was its master. It was literally a work of the devil,[316] "patched together" with Mahomet's "pestilent doctrine and grosse opinions".[317] Whetstones considered it was impossible to think of a greater blasphemy against God than Mahomet's opinions which sent millions of souls to hell.[318] Mahomet's doctrine was damnable and he was "the great seducer of the world".[319] By far, the Koran was most grievously censured when it became identified with divinity. This, in Christian terms, meant that the Koran was an idol. Then, Mahomet's legacy became the target for the most vituperative remarks.[320]

The word "Alcoran" appears only four times in Tamburlaine, Parts I and II. Twice it is used in conjurations on equal terms with its founder Mahomet where it is treated with respect (1T. 3.3.76; 2T. 1.1.138). The other two instances of its use occur in the scene of the burning of the books of the temple of Mahomet (2T. 5.1. 172, 192). From the above comments on the

---

316. See Chew, op. cit., n. 9, pp. 405 and 440; Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 2, p. 104, n. 116. Ashton describes Mahomet's "bookes of his lawe wheresoever he founde theym, as false heresies and diuilysh doctrine": Peter Ashton, A shorte treatise vpon the Turkes Chronicles, compyled by Paulus Iouius (London,1546), fol. lxv_v - lxvi.

317. See Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol.120.

318. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 12, p. 56.

319. Knolles, op. cit., n. 12, p. 22.

320. Richard Burton describes the Koran as "a gallimaufrie of lyes, tales, ceremonies, traditions, precepts, stole from other sects, and confusedly heaped up, to delude a company of rude and barbarous clownes": quoted in Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 439. Sir Thomas Browne calls it "an ill-composed Piece", "containing in it Vain and ridiculous Errors in Philosophy, impossibilities, fictions, and vanities beyond laughter": Religio Medici, Part I, section xxiii, quoted in Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 439. Robert Baron qualifies the Koran as "a Fardel of Blasphemies, Rabinical Fables, Ridiculous Discourses, Impostures, bestialities, Inconveniences, Impossibilities and contradictions": quoted in Chew, ibid. Or, again, the Koran is a collection of "mad fooleries": see ibid., p. 435. The Koran is a mixture of the essential points of faith taken from the Gospels added to personal anecdotes about Mahomet with legends and lies: see ibid., p. 436. The Koran abounds with silly fables: see Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 2, p. 167, n. 24.

reverence displayed for the book, one can sense the utter gravity of Tamburlaine's action when he throws the Koran in his bonfire.[321]

III

Having given some attention to Mohammed and then to his Koran, one must now turn to the third component of Islam, that is, to its body of "traditions". When Mohammed suddenly disappeared from the scene in 632 A.D., his followers had to face the fact that the authoritative direction hitherto received from on high had come to an end.[322] No more could they turn to their Prophet for precepts to guide them in all the aspects of their social life[323] as they had done while he lived. Neither could all the needed answers be found directly from the Koran. There remained one possibility, however. Mohammed's words and actions had had an exemplary value in matters serious as well as in the smallest details of everyday behaviour.[324] These did not necessarily have to disappear with the death of the Prophet. Besides, Mohammed's disciples felt that the Prophet had to be obeyed even beyond death.[325] Moreover, the need to find a substitute for the presence of Mohammed was made all the more urgent by the fact that strife and confusion dominated the scene in the absence of the Prophet. Divergent opinions, conflicting interests in

---

321. For a detailed analysis of this scene, see below, pp. 321 ff.

322. Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 88, Mohammed has always loomed large in the religious consciousness of his followers: see Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, p. 7. For Mohammed as a model of perfection, see ibid., p. 9.

323. See Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 43. The Koran tended to become the vehicle of military commands. Much of it deals with aspects of warfare: victories, success, bravery, cowardice. All this is an immediate communication from God: see Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 2, pp. 100 ff., notes 100 and 101.

324. See Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 43. See also Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 8 and 41.

325. "The Messenger of Allah must be obeyed beyond death": Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 293.

political, religious, and tribal matters, hitherto held under firm control by Mohammed's strong hand, now broke loose into violence, civil strife, and turmoil.[326] Consequently, in order to establish an orderly Islamic society under a strong authority, scholars resorted to the device of recording all that Mohammed had ever done, said, or tolerated[327] or was reported to have done, said, or tolerated during his lifetime. This material could then be used as rules of conduct. A systematic interrogation throughout all the Mohammedan world was undertaken[328] and the results came to be known as the hadith, "a technical term for a tradition of what the prophet said or did".[329] The only condition for the validity of any particular piece of information was that it should be possible to trace the item through a chain of reliable transmitters back to Mohammed.[330] As may be expected, forged names often filled the missing links in the chain of transmitters as the need arose,[331] or, when necessary, traditions were discredited by saying they emanated from unreliable sources.[332] Thus the way was open to an enormous mass of absurdities, forgeries, anachronisms, many of which were inspired by political

---

326. See ibid., pp. 43 and 290. Another reason which impelled the Moslems to resort to the support of traditions was the ever-present controversies with the neighbouring Christians: see Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, p. 16.

327. Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 89 and 105-106. See also Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, p. 470 ff.; Guillaume, op. cit., n. 35, pp. 67-68; Watt, op.cit., n. 26, pp. 81-83.

328. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 35, pp. 66 ff.

329. Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 201. See also ibid., pp. 88-89; ibid., op. cit., n. 35, p. 10. The hadith is also described as "an invention designed to connect the pious caliph, whose zeal for the sunna was gratefully recognized by theologians, with the tradition literature of Islam": see ibid., p. 19. See also Watt, op. cit., n. 26, pp. 81-82; Margoliouth, op. cit., n. 47, p. 10; Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 75; Hamidullah, op. cit., n. 44, p. 470.

330. See Anawati, op. cit., n. 172, p. 16 and n. 9; Watt, op. cit., n. 26, p. 82; Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 89. Because it has so many authors and so many forms, the early authority of the hadith is difficult to establish: see Guillaume, op. cit., n. 35, pp. 12 ff.

331. See Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, p. 17; Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, p. 43.

332. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 94.

and sectarian bias.[333] Although a large part of this recorded material was inaccurate and untrustworthy, nevertheless, it played an important role in the consolidation of Islam into a system which was able to survive its founder.[334] This enormous bulk of literature, which came to be known as the tradition of Islam, contributed to establish a balance between the rival forces of militarism and pacificism, asceticism and materialism, mysticism and literalism, free will and determinism,[335] all of which were disrupting the Moslem world, and became as important as the Koran itself,[336] and sometimes more important.

The main source of strife and internecine quarrels was the problem of choosing Mohammed's successor or Caliph. Legitimate succession was disputed between the first three caliphs and each their successors, who had been appointed by various means, and the fourth caliph. The first three had been related to Mohammed by marriage only while the fourth caliph, a cousin of Mohammed and a member of the same tribe, was at the same time his son-in-law by marriage to one of his daughters Fatima. According to some, Ali alone could claim to be of the line of Mohammed and, therefore, be his legitimate successor.[337] Issues over the legitimacy of the caliph, the nature and the mandate of the ruler himself and his position and relevancy with respect to the authority of the Koran gave rise to a whole spectrum of opinions and these, in turn, to factions and sects. With time, these tended to align

---

333. See ibid., pp. 89-90. The desire to assimilate the characters of Mohammed to that of Jesus is at the root of many distortions: see Guillaume, op. cit., n. 35, p. 12. See also Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, p. 17.

334. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 35, pp. 12-13 and 65.

335. See ibid., p. 13.

336. See Arnold, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 17 and 40-41; ibid., n. 76, p. 38; Margoliouth, op. cit., n. 47, pp. 10-12; Guillaume, op. cit., n. 35, pp. 9-10.

337. See Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, pp. 18-19; Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 416.

themselves into two main opposing groups known as the Sunnite and the Shi'ite sects. Both basically remained Koranic but each preserved specific concepts about its respective leaders and its body of doctrine. These concepts gave each sect its distinctive characteristics, as will be seen. It is impossible as well as unnecessary for the purposes of this study to present a detailed description of all the sects belonging to each of the two groups or to indulge in an analysis of the historical characters and events which contributed to the development of each.[338] The following is of necessity an over-simplified description.

The name "Sunnite" came from the importance these Moslems attached to the "Sunna" or "customs"[339] as they had been derived from the immediate past practices of Mohammed and the four caliphs and, later, as expressions of "the ideal behaviour of the Prophet as enshrined in tradition".[340] The collection of these became what was called the "standard practice".[341] Its validity rested on the belief that Mohammed had been divinely inspired in his words and actions and that he must be obeyed.[342] Sunnites rather believed that the Prophet had enjoyed the prerogatives of infallibility and superhuman knowledge by a special favour of God rather than as attributes inherent to his nature.[343] With time, Mohammed's infallibility became the necessary "guarantee for the accuracy of his record of the divine communication".[344] Whatever

---

338. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 35, pp. 65 ff.

339. See Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 75; Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 153.

340. Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 92. See also ibid., n. 35, p. 11; Watt, op. cit., n. 26, p. 128.

341. See Watt, op. cit., n. 26, pp. 83 and 124; Anawati, op. cit., n. 172, p. 16 and n. 9; Guillaume, op. cit., n. 35, pp. 65 ff.

342. See Watt, op. cit., n. 26, p. 128. Every action of Mohammed after he received his divine mission was considered as part of his mission and teaching: see Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 153. See also Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 97-98.

343. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 119-120.

344. See Margoliouth, op. cit., n. 47, pp. 10-11.

authenticity they may have had, these elements of "standard practice", or traditions, were vital to the survival of Islam and were eventually preserved as a science by the Moslems with greater zeal than any other.[345] The home of the Sunna had been Medina.[346] For all these reasons, the Sunnites eventually considered themselves as the orthodox Moslems who lived by the Book, that is, the Koran, and by the Sunna of the Prophet.[347] Any new problem was examined in the light of the Koranic text and the Sunnite tradition: a mode of action was then adopted as "the actual practice of the community in so far as it was Islamic".[348]

Turks were generally considered to be Sunnites.[349] For a long time, the highest religious authority of Islam was the Caliph of Turkey or the chief Mufti of Constantinople.[350] Sunnites usually outnumbered the other sects by nine to one[351] and boasted that Mohammed's descendants, subjects of great reverence, belonged to their sect.[352] In general, the emphasis of authority was placed on Mohammed, on his Koran as the expression of his message, and on the traditions; these were to be the guides for the acting ruler.

---

345. See ibid., p. 11.

346. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 94; ibid., op. cit., n. 35, p. 11.

347. See Watt, op. cit., n. 26, p. 124; Anawati, op. cit., n. 172, p. 16 and n. 9; Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, pp. 236 ff. The Sunna was declared to be judge of the Koran. It was eventually considered to be of divine origin. By using the authority of the Prophet, it became a powerful weapon "to rouse the public to a sense of their religious duties, and to undermine the world power of the government": Guillaume, op. cit., n. 35, pp. 43-44. See also ibid., p. 70, Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 153.

348. Watt, op. cit., n. 26, p. 124.

349. See Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 269.

350. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 103.

351. See Watt, op. cit., n. 26, p. 260; Anawati, op. cit., n. 172, pp. 16-17, n. 9.

352. These were usually singled out by the fact that they wore green coloured garments, a colour forbidden to other Moslems: see Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 198.

The other sect, "Shi'ism, meaning a "party"[353] or a "sect",[354] has a very complex history which reflects the confusion spread by propagandists from the ninth century onward.[355] The Prophet was supposed to have designated Ali alone as his successor;[356] this raised queries about the legitimacy of the caliphs. To support their positions, Shi'ites did not hesitate, as it has been proven since,[357] to rewrite history quite freely. In this way, they defended their political claims[358] that the true heirs to the caliphate were to be found among the descendants of Ali and Fatima[359] by right divine.[360] They were to enjoy all the religious and secular privileges pertaining to the office.[361] To prove the validity of their claims, the propagandists of the Shiites played on two main themes: the glorification of Ali, and that of his family.[362]

Ali was exalted to all heights of power and prestige, in certain cases, almost as much as the Prophet was by the Logos doctrine.[363] Ali was supposed to have inherited certain charismatic qualities from Mohammed.[364] To many, he

---

353. See Watt, op. cit., n. 26, p. 68.

354. See Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 19.

355. See Watt, op. cit., n. 26, pp. 65-66.

356. See Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 416. To others, Ali was the God-appointed successor to Mohammed: see Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 30. See also Watt, op. cit., n. 26, pp. 15 and 112.

357. See Watt, op. cit., n. 26, pp. 3, 15 and 65-66.

358. See ibid., pp. 3 and 169.

359. See ibid., p. 66. See also Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 29; Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, pp. 462-463; Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 27; Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 264.

360. See Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 26.

361. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 27.

362. See Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, pp. 26 and 30; Guillaume, op. cit., n. 35, pp. 61-63; Watt, op. cit., n. 26, p. 66.

363. The attributes credited to the Imam were eventually transferred to Mohammed: see Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. vi.

364. Qualities which Moslems wished to see in Ali must necessarily have existed in Mohammed; this led to the glorification of the latter: see Watt, op. cit., n. 26, pp. 15 and 66 ff.

was second to none but Mohammed and sometimes equal to him.[365] Others exalted him to near-divinity.[366] Ali was the representative of God,[367] or better yet, an incarnation of divinity,[368] or of the God-head.[369] He was the supreme authority to his descendants,[370] "a continuing divine revelation in human form",[371] his soul passing to the next successor.[372] Some claimed that his soul was kept alive, that he would come again.[373] Ali's prerogatives were to be transmitted to the family stock.[374]

The wish to perpetuate the presence of Ali inspired the fanciful theory of the imam, that is, of a charismatic leader divinely inspired and divinely preserved from sin and error,[375] a Perfect Man in the archetypal sense,[376] an infallible guide who was to appear "in every age to whom alone God entrusted the guidance of his servants".[377] The imam was endowed "with infallibility

---

365. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 118.

366. See Watt, op. cit., n. 26, p. 15; Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 431.

367. See Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 30.

368. See ibid.

369. Ali "was endued with a particle of divinity and with sovereign power, and ... he was the person in whose form God appeared, with whose hands he created all things, and with whose tongue he published his commands; and therefore they say he was in being before the creation of heaven and earth": Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 267; Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 118.

370. See Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 264.

371. See Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 30.

372. See ibid., p. 30.

373. See ibid., p. 29.

374. See ibid., p. 30; Watt. op. cit., n. 26, p. 66.

375. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 120; Watt, op. cit., n. 26, pp. 66-67. Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 30; Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, pp. 144, 183 and 427. Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, pp. 264-265.

376. See Gardet, op. cit., n. 179, p. 113; ibid., op. cit., n. 44, pp. 465 and 470.

377. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 117; Macdonald, op. cit., n. 47, p.171.

and supernatural graces".[378] In the words of Alfred Guillaume, he is "the divinely appointed ruler and teacher of the faithful who has succeeded to the prerogatives of the prophet himself".[379] The imam was to be an incarnation of the God-head.[380] His body was but an accident inseparable from visible form;[381] he could not be physically harmed, nor would he cast any shadow.[382] Superhuman qualities were inherited by him from Adam through the line of Mohammed, as well as "a divine light which is given to chosen mortals from generation to generation".[383] In this frame of thought, Mohammed was reduced to be an intermediate member of a series which had not yet run its course and was no more the "seal of the Prophets".[384] At all times in the world, there should be an imam or some representative of God, as great or greater than Mohammed, whose right it would be to rule, teach,and guide his people.[385] He was to be the sole and ultimate authority in the interpretation of the Koran, the source of all truth, the only being with the unquestioned right to men's obedience. There even was to be a kind of Messianic quality about him. Certain Shi'ite sects lived in the expectation of a great Imam, a Mahdi or a Messiah,[386] who would come as a military or a religious leader or both, to

---

378. Rodinson, op. cit., n. 26, p. 308. See also Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 108; Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, pp. 183 and 427.

379. Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 118.

380. See below, pp. 327 ff. The Imam, was "regarded as the living representative of God and as a semi-divine personality on whom the world depends for its existence": see Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. vi. See also Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 183.

381. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 118.

382. See ibid.

383. Ibid.

384. See ibid., p. 123.

385. See Macdonald, op. cit., n. 47, p. 171.

386. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 120; Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 27; Watt, op. cit., n. 26, pp. 30 and 67.

establish a reign of justice, truth and righteousness on earth.[387] It was a constant duty for a Shi'ite to seek him[388] and give allegiance to him. This desire for a saviour or a deliverer provided a state of continual messianic hope.[389]

Carried to the extreme by some sects and inspired by the belief in the anthropological God put forth by the Koran,[390] the Persian Imams became divine hypostases,[391] semi-divine personalities on whom the world would depend for its existence.[392] The transfer of these prerogatives to successors amounted to a transmigration of the soul of Mohammed or Ali,[393] to a metempsychosis among men,[394] according to some, or to a descent of God in his creatures.[395] The Shi'ites went to great lengths to give theological meaning to Ali whom, Wherry tells us, they held in veneration beyond "all bounds of reason and decendy",[396] and to his successors. These efforts contributed largely to the posthumous exaltation of Mohammed[397] as he was explained by the

---

387. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 120; Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 29; Watt, op. cit., n. 26, p. 67.

388. See Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, pp. 27 and 30.

389. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 120; Watt, op. cit., n. 26, p. 30; Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 465. This messianic hope was particularly alive in 143 A.H. and after. It was fed by unusual natural phenomena: shooting stars, the appearance of the Halley comet, etc.: see Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 34.

390. See Margoliouth, op. cit., n. 47, p. 30. See also Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. vi.

391. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 121.

392. See Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. vi; Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 183.

393. See Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 31.

394. See ibid., pp. 29-30; Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 266.

395. See Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 266.

396. See ibid.

397. See Nicholson, op. cit., n. 24, p. vi; Gardet, op. cit., n. 44, p. 183.

Logos[398] and the "light"[399] doctrines. As a matter of fact, in Persia, where Imamism was declared the national religion early in the sixteenth century,[400] the ruler was often treated as a God.[401]

As may be expected from the above remarks, mysticism flourished, especially among the Shi'ites.[402] Their search for an inner meaning under the plain words of the Koran[403] was persistent. Their devotion to Ali and his family and to their mission kept alive "the thought of a continuous speaking of God to mankind and of an exalting of mankind into the presence of God".[404] Their search also emphasized the religious aspects of sovereignty.[405] When disputes arose between factions, they often were about the balance to be established between the authority of the Koran and that of the inspired man,[406] both sides of the dispute being deeply involved in religious issues.[407]

Shi'ites of Persia have considered themselves as the only true Moslems;[408] Sunnites of Turkey have claimed they are the orthodox Mohammedans.[409] They

---

398. See above, pp. 184 ff.

399. See above, p. 188 and n. 211.

400. See Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 229; Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 307-308.

401. A story is told about a governor in a Persian province who was unable to prevent his people from giving him the style and treatment reserved for a god. They could not understand any other kind of ruler: see Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 31. Imams came to be worshipped as gods: see Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 207.

402. Macdonald says that "Islam became and is a mystical faith": op. cit., n. 47, p. 159. See ibid., op. cit., n. 27, p. 121.

403. Shi'ites went theological: see Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, pp. 29 and 121.

404. Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 121.

405. See Watt, op. cit., n. 26, p. 131.

406. See ibid.

407. See ibid.

408. See Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 123. Chew describes the Shi'a heresy as "Mohammedanism ... in its Persian form": see op. cit., n. 9, p. 50.

409. See Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 209.

have been mutually hostile; the heretical Shi'ites[410] have entertained an implacable hatred for the orthodox Sunnites while the latter have anathematized the first.[411] Wars have been intermittent between the two sects.[412] Wherry judges that their main differences lie in their respective attitudes and concepts with regard to Mohammed as well as their leaders. Mohammed is held much more in reverence by the Sunnites than by the Shi'ites. His teaching in the Koran and his examples in the Sunna are the source of inspiration and the precepts by which they organize their lives. Anything having to do with their Prophet is of extreme importance.[413] The two places of pilgrimage, Mecca, Mohammed's birthplace, and Medina, the place of his burial, are highly venerated by the Moslems because of their associations with the Prophet. Members of Mohammed's tribe are held in high esteem by all; to be a descendant of Mohammed is a great honour.[414] The Caliph, the custodian of Islam who is considered as direct in the line of successors since Mohammed, is expected to rule according to the dictates of the Prophet. In theory, he should be rather an administrator of political and religious matters than an absolute ruler in the manner of the imams.

While the Shi'ites preserve a certain cult for Mohammed and his Koran, the position of the imam or leader is glorified into that of a superhuman being.[415] Each succeeding imam is a sort of manifestation of God for his generation, favoured by direct and divine inspiration in all his initiatives as a leader.[416] This halo of divinity raises him to a status equal to if not

---

410. See Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 107; Anawati, op. cit., n. 172, p.17.

411. See Wherry, op. cit., n. 35, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 269; Macdonald, op. cit., n. 27, p. 35.

412. See Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 209.

413. See Rodinson, op. cit., n. 22, pp. 308 ff.

414. See ibid., pp. 307-308.

415. See above, pp. 215 ff.

416. See above, pp. 215 ff. and p. 217, n. 380.

superior to that of Mohammed. His decrees, therefore, must be accepted and obeyed immediately.[417] There is no place for debate of any kind. While the Sunnite leader attempts to rule according to the spirit of the Prophet, the position of the Shi'ite leader, as a deified ruler, is one of absolute authority.[418]

One wonders whether the Elizabethans were familiar with the existence of these Islamic religious sects and with the differences which distinguished each from the other. Unfortunately, this study does not make an extensive investigation into this matter. However, there is evidence to show that they probably knew of these Moslem quarrels. Some of Marlowe's contemporaries, and perhaps colleagues, allude to the antagonism which characterized the relationships between the Shi'ites and the Sunnites. Thomas Nashe, in one of his works published in 1596, compares his own relationship with Gabriel Harvey to that between the Persians and the Turks. In his foreword "To all Christian Readers ... ", he says:

> Harvey and I (a couple of beggars) take vpon vs to bandie factions, and contend like the Vrsini and Coloni in Roome: or as the Turkes and Persians about Mahomet and Mortus Alli, which should bee the greatest.[419]

Thus, it would appear that some Elizabethans who probably knew Marlowe were aware of the disputes about the rival leaders of Islam among the Moslems. Comments about this rivalry could have reached England long before Nashe's remark. Schiltberger, whose account was first published in the fifteenth

---

417. See above, p. 217.

418. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 22, p. 120.

419. Thomas Nashe, Haue with you to Saffron-Walden or Gabriell Harueys Hunt is vp ... (London, 1596), in Ronald B. McKerrow, ed., The Works of Thomas Nashe (Oxford, 1966), vol.3, p. 19.

century, was aware of the presence of different sects and of their essential differences. He speaks of a city, which he identifies as Rei, in a large country "where they do not believe in Machmet as do other Infidels. They believe in a certain Aly" who, he adds, was a great persecutor of the Christian faith.[420] Others mention the Persian Sophy or ruler who listened to his people's demands with a veil over his face "as the prophet Moyses was wonte to do", and who rejected Mahomet "namynge hym selfe a prophet sent of God",[421] supposedly an imam. Chew notes that Ashton displays a sympathetic prejudice in favour of the Persian Sophy who "called Mahomet in despite, a bondeman and a vyle bowghte drudge".[422] Chew speaks of the voyages of Anthony Jenkinson undertaken on behalf of the Muscovy Company in 1557 with the purpose of establishing trade routes with the East. Jenkinson was calculating on the Persian Shah's hatred of the Turks to establish commercial relations with him and his country. Unfortunately, he had not reckoned with the Shi'ite Shah's hatred for Christians.[423] Newton speaks of a Sophy, who lived in 1258 and after, and "bore himselfe very loftie and high for that he was as he saide descended of the race and Pedagrewe of Ali the Sonne in lawe of Mahomet".[424] Fortescue describes the "Sophi, whiche liueth this daie, as sworne ennimie to the Turke".[425] William Biddulph published the narrative of an expedition begun early in 1599 in a book entitled The Preachers Travels published in 1609 and again in 1611. He has much to say about the Persian form of Mohammedanism called the Shi'a heresy.[426] Chew notes

---

420. See Telfer, op. cit., n. 13, p. 44.

421. Ashton, op. cit., n. 316, fol. lxv v.

422. Ibid., quoted in Chew, op. cit., n. 9, p. 107.

423. See Chew, op. cit., n. 9, pp. 209 ff.

424. Newton, op. cit., n. 32, fol. 117 v.

425. Fortescue, op. cit., n. 12, fol. 87 v.

426. See Chew, op. cit., n. 9, pp. 49-50.

that the Shi'ite minority was able to establish the Shi'a sect as the national religion of Persia by the beginning of the sixteenth century.[427] A well-informed book called Histoire Generale de la Religion des Turcs by Michel Baudier appeared in 1625 and soon became known in England. Chew says that this author presents "a fairly accurate, though incomplete, survey of the heresies and schools of Mohammedanism with particular reference to the hostility of the orthodox Sunni Turks to the Shi'a Persians.[428] This book also contains a biography of Mahomet and an account of the years under the first four caliphs.[429] If so accurate knowledge about Islam was already available early in the seventeenth century, one may assume that some of this knowledge had reached England via tales and heresay before this time. One may conclude that the Elizabethans had at least some notions about the different sects of the Moslem faith. It is doubtful that Marlowe's inquisitive mind would have left so exotic a topic totally unexplored.

How are the above considerations related to the play and what do they contribute to the understanding of it? To begin with, one might point out that the name of Mahomet does not occur in the play throughout the first two acts of Tamburlaine; these deal mainly with the struggle for power between Tamburlaine and the Persians. Bajazet, the Turk, is the first to refer to the Prophet when he is contemplating a battle with the new king of Persia, Tamburlaine (1T. 3.1.54). However, it may be preferable to begin by studying the Tamburlaine-Mahomet relationship before examining the nature of the awareness of the existence of the Prophet entertained by Bajazet and the Turks.

---

427. See ibid., p. 229.

428. Ibid., p. 446.

429. See ibid., and the plate showing the title-page of Baudier's book on the opposite page.

Out of the three dozen or so references to the founder of Islam, eight of these are made by Tamburlaine;[430] none of them expresses any particular cult or devotion for the Prophet. Indeed, the first occurrence of Mahomet's name in connection with Tamburlaine happens during the martial banquet and is used only to bring out the total impotence on the part of the Prophet to save his servant Bajazet from his captivity and misery. According to Tamburlaine, Mahomet does not stop him from treating Bajazet as he does simply because "he cannot let it" (1T. 4.4.52). In the second part of the play, when he is about to face the Turks on the Larissa plains, Tamburlaine tells his three warlords that he has "sworn by sacred Mahomet" (2T. 1.3.109) to make it part of his empire. This is the kind of conjuration which is quite natural on the lips of a Moslem and could be expected to occur quite frequently in the speeches of Tamburlaine. However, this is the only instance of this kind in the whole play. When Tamburlaine utters the Prophet's name again he is in the height of anger. He has just discovered that Calyphas has defected from the battle-field contrary to his own instructions. Tamburlaine feels deeply slighted and humiliated, "wounded with shame" (2T. 4.1.94) for having but this "Image of sloth, and picture of a slave" (2T. 4.1.91) for a son. Fired by a revengeful anger, Tamburlaine taunts Jove in the following lines:

> By Mahomet, thy mighty friend I sweare,
> In sending to my issue such a soule,
> Created of the massy dregges of earth,
> The scum and tartar of the Elements,
> Wherein was neither corrage, strength or wit,
> But follie, sloth, and damned idlenesse:
> Thou hast procur'd a greater enemie,
> Than he that darted mountaines at thy head,
> Shaking the burthen mighty Atlas beares:
> Whereat thou trembling hid'st thee in the aire,
> Cloth'd with a pitchy cloud for being seene.
> (2T. 4.1.121-131)

---

430. It may be of value to note that Tamburlaine does not mention the name of Mahomet in the first part of the play: all these references occur in the second part: see 2T. 1.3.109; 4.1.121, 196; 5.1.174, 178, 181, 186 and 197.

The seething Tamburlaine reviles the impotent, timorous, and inefficient Jove. Indirectly, Tamburlaine contrasts the power of his own spirit over matter with that of Jove. Tamburlaine's soul, mightier than the giants of the past who unsuccessfully challenged Jove with violent upheavals of the earth,[431] now forces this same trembling Jove to recoil under the cover of "a pitchy cloud". Furthermore, Tamburlaine equates Jove's spirit, which lacks the vitality and power to rise above matter, with the scum and heavy dregs of the earth[432] of Calyphas's soul. Jove's spirit sinks into sloth and folly in the product of his own creation, the soul of Calyphas in this case. Because the degenerate Jove is made responsible for the decadent Calyphas, only enmity of the most intense kind can exist between the fiery spirit of Tamburlaine and the feeble one of Jove. If the god Jove is so bereft of any glory, what prestige can there remain for Mahomet, Jove's "mighty friend"? Set against the proofs of Mahomet's total helplessness to save the captive Bajazet, these words cannot be other than ironic to the utmost degree. If Jove is feeble, Mahomet is weaker yet. Thus, Tamburlaine has motivated his hatred for Jove by establishing a kind of identity between Jove and his son Calyphas. By extension, the same kind of hatred is held for Mahomet, the friend of Jove. If the gravity of the enmity between the two antagonists is partly determined by the status of the enemy, then to swear by Mahomet to fight Jove is calling upon Mahomet to endorse the most despicable of initiatives a warrior could possibly anticipate. Instead of filling the role of mediator between men, between Tamburlaine, in this case, and God, Mahomet is called upon to guarantee Tamburlaine's oath of violent hatred towards Jove and to become an accomplice to Tamburlaine's revenge against divinity. Far from expressing allegiance to Mahomet Tamburlaine includes him within the circle of his greatest enemies

---

431. See Jump, ed. cit., n. 106. p. 39, n.

432. On the significance of these words in relation to human aspirations as understood at the time of the Renaissance, see below, pp. 377 ff. and p. 381, n. 97.

and among the objects of his deepest scorn. Mahomet's name comes in a context of hatred and anger and in a situation of retribution for the most inglorious cowardice of Calyphas in what, implicitly at least, amounts to a holy war between Tamburlaine on the one part, and Jove and Mahomet on the other.

When Tamburlaine next mentions Mahomet, he speaks of him as of a fretful god in tears (for Tamburlaine does allude to Mahomet as a god at some stage of the play), helpless about the havoc that he is planning to create on land and in the air. Tamburlaine threatens Callapine and the Turks in the following words:

> I will with Engines, never exercisde,
> Conquer, sacke, and utterly consume
> Your cities and yourgolden palleces,
> And with the flames that beat against the clowdes
> Incense the heavens, and make the starres to melt,
> As if they were the teares of Mahomet
> For hot consumption of his countries pride.
> (2T. 4.1.191-197)

These words, once more, unmistakably present Tamburlaine's power over creation, especially as a warrior. He plans to extend the landscape of cities in flames into a blazing heaven and melting stars. One wonders if Marlowe did not have the cosmic image of Mahomet in mind when he equates the melting stars with Mahomet's tears. Is Marlowe matching the power of the cosmic Tamburlaine with that of the cosmic Mahomet, the sum of all creation? If so, Mahomet is unmistakably the loser of the match. Once more Tamburlaine belittles the mighty Mahomet. The Scythian king of Persia is devoid of any of the admiration, reverence, and respect for the founder of Islam which might be expected of a true Moslem.

The last occurrences of the Prophet's name on the lips of Tamburlaine are still less glorious for Mahomet. The Prophet is under direct attack as was Jove in the scene of the slaying of Calyphas. The total helplessness of Mahomet is once more emphasized in no uncertain terms. However, the importance of this scene in the play deserves the full analysis which is given to it later in this study.[433]

433. See below, pp. 316 ff.

The position of Tamburlaine's warlords with respect to the founder of Islam is also suggested in the play. Theridamas and Techelles have attacked Balsera, the chief and richest city of the province of Soria. They meet a captain whom they summon to yield the city. The captain answers in the following words:

> Were you that are the friends of Tamburlain,
> Brothers to holy Mahomet himselfe,
> I would not yeeld it.
> (2T. 3.3.35-38)

These lines are meaningful in as much as Moslem connotations are read into them. The importance Moslems attached to Mahomet's kin, the parallel and contrasting elements with respect to Mahomet, all of these contribute to qualify the Captain's answer. From the Captain's words, we are made to understand that the strongest argument Tamburlaine's warlords could have used to persuade him to yield would have been claims to kinship with Mahomet, the highest honour any Moslem could claim for himself.[434] The Captain's refusal to yield gains its emphasis from the implied allusion to this Moslem tradition. Secondly, the structural pattern of these lines suggests a parallel, even a possible equation between "the friends of Tamburlaine" and the "brothers to holy Mahomet", and, therefore, between Tamburlaine and Mahomet. Once more, in Marlowe's text, the one is balanced against the other. Finally, while the structural parallel implies an equivalence between Mahomet and Tamburlaine, the hypothetical quality of the statement suggests mutual exclusion. Tamburlaine and his friends in the play are not brothers of Mahomet. Neither are they, in the widest sense of the word "brothers", even of the family of Mahomet. As opposed to Bajazet, Tamburlaine is no kin of the founder of Islam. Tamburlaine and his friends are, therefore, excluded from the Islamic allegiance to the Prophet both by their attitudes to Mahomet and by their

---

434. To be of Mahomet's kin was considered to be a great honour: see above, p. 66 and n. 138; p. 214 and n. 352.

family origins.

Thus,Tamburlaine displays no feelings of love or devotion for Mahomet.[435] In fact, the relationship is one of rivalry and competition where Mahomet is decidedly given the part of the loser. The image of Mahomet projected by Tamburlaine is one of total helplessness, of tearful despair of ever being able to change the state of affairs for the Turks. In vain do we expect Tamburlaine to express any deep respect, awe, or veneration towards the one who should symbolize the religious aspirations of the Moslem Tamburlaine. Instead, Tamburlaine expresses extreme scorn for Mahomet and his Alcoran. He emphasizes Mahomet's utter disregard for his own in war (2T. 5.1.178-181), in captivity, and everywhere (1T 4.4). Tamburlaine even seems to have succeeded to beat down Mahomet, his rival, into sheer oblivion for Tamburlaine is esteemed to be "greater than Mahomet" (2T. 3.4.46) according to Theridamas.

Was this deliberate on the part of Marlowe? Was he trying to respect and preserve the Tamerlane-image shorn of any Moslem traits like the one which could be found in the chronicles? Or did he avoid making Tamburlaine too zealous a Moslem in order that his hero might not alienate from himself the sympathy of the audience? It would seem that Marlowe refrained from linking his hero with any details which might suggest a character too staunch in his Islamic principles. Or, it may be, that Tamburlaine's norms of conduct were derived from another area of ethics.

Zenocrate mantions Mahomet only twice in spite of the fact that she is an Egyptian.[436] The first time, during the battle between her husband and Bajazet, while she and Zabina are having their own parallel verbal combat (1T. 3.3.166 ff), she mentions Mahomet (1T. 3.3.208) in a manner entirely in keeping with Tamburlaine's opinions about the power of the Prophet. Mahomet

---

435. Paul H. Kocher sums up the Moslem aspects of Marlowe's Tamburlaine throughout the play by saying that "Tamburlaine has never been a Mohammedan in anything save name": see Christopher Marlowe: A Study of his Thought, Learning, and Character (New York, 1946), p. 87.

436. Egypt was reputed to be the stronghold of Islam: see above, p. 74.

would be met with utter disbelief should he come down himself from heaven and swear that Tamburlaine is slain or defeated. Her faith in the power of Tamburlaine is greater than that in the words of Mahomet. However, when she contemplates the corpses of Bajazet and Zabina on the stage, she has premonitions about her proud and ambitious Tamburlaine. She cannot help but pray "mighty Jove and holy Mahomet" (1T. 5.1.363) that they exercise not the retribution which Tamburlaine has merited for himself by holding the Great Turk and his queen in such scorn (1T. 5.1.364 ff.). Zenocrate has encouraged and supported Tamburlaine in his ambitious plans for greatness and power and now trembles with fear at the possible outcome of her action. However, Zenocrate's references to Mahomet are too few to make it possible to draw any conclusions about her genuine allegiance to the Prophet. Besides, in this scene, she is much more dominated by fear than by devotion for the Prophet. As may be seen, her position and feelings are too sharply contrasted on these two occasions to allow any valid assessment to be made of the true place Mahomet occupies in Zenocrate's religious consciousness.

The place Mahomet occupies in the minds of the Turks is quite a different matter. Of the other allusions made to Mahomet in the play, all but three are made by the Turks, that is, by Bajazet, his queen Zabina, and his associates. In fact, as was said before, the name of Mahomet does not appear in the dialogue before Bajazet comes on the stage himself (1T. 3.1.54). The attitude shown by the Turks is more in keeping with what could be expected from Moslems. Bajazet identifies himself as a kinsman of Mahomet (1T. 3.3.76). He is mindful of his kinsman's sepulchre, swears by it that he will defeat Tamburlaine and deal with him accordingly (1T. 3.3.76 ff.). In her prayer to Mahomet for Bajazet's victory over Tamburlaine (1T. 3.3.195 ff.), Zabina reminds the Prophet that her husband has made his pilgrimage to his shrine and that he has offered jewels there when he first fought the Christians (1T. 3.3.199-200). Bajazet is also mindful of Moslem rites. He begs the priests of holy Mahomet to offer sacrifices to intercede against Tamburlaine (1T. 4.2.2 ff.). It is clear that

Bajazet has been the faithful Moslem mindful of his religious obligations to Mahomet, his relative. Bajazet and Zabina have placed their faith in him for the happy outcome of their ventures. Thus are they a prey to profound dismay when they see themselves the captives of Tamburlaine. What has happened to the power of Mahomet, they wonder and lament. In their hurt, they turn to him instinctively and expect from him an explanation for their misfortune and help to free themselves from it (1T. 3.3.269-270; 5.1.239 ff). It is very obvious that they held the Prophet, until then the centre and source of their power, responsible for their crushing defeat. There is no other explanation. Zabina can think of no better solution than to seek for another Mahomet to save them from their misery:

> Then is there left no Mahomet, no God,
> . . . . . no hope of end
> To our infamous monstrous slaveries?
> (1T. 5.1.239-241)

Since the heavens are deaf to their plea, since Mahomet, "the friend of God",[437] refuses to answer, there is nothing left to do but to die. While Tamburlaine expects no interference or help from Mahomet in any of his initiatives, Bajazet and Zabina are astounded by the fact that the Prophet is deaf to their pleas. For them, there is no other source of hope than in Mahomet; loss of faith in him produces devastating results. Thus the religious attitudes of Tamburlaine and Bajazet are clearly different, almost at opposite poles to each other. What was in Marlowe's mind when he constructed his play in this manner?

The next character whose devotion to the Prophet deserves an examination is Orcanes, the Turkish king of Natolia. He is also mindful of "sacred Mahomet, the friend of God"(2T. 1.1.137), whose legacy is the "holy Alcaron" (2T. 1.1.138), whose suspended coffin is in Mecca. These are all part of the

---

437. Mahomet is called thus several times in the play: see 2T. 1.1.137. See also 2T. 3.1.3; 4.1.121. So was Abraham in the Bible.

conjurations when he swears to be faithful to his truce of peace with the Christian Sigismund and Frederick. Later, after he has prayed Christ to be revenged upon the treacherous Christians and has subsequently won the battle, he takes care that Mahomet has an equal share, or almost (2T. 2.3.33-34), of the credit for the victory along with Christ (2T. 2.3.11). Orcanes's reverence for Mahomet never fails. Throughout the play, Orcanes's attitude reveals his respect for the Prophet and a consciousness of Mahomet's closeness in his affairs. Orcanes displays a veneration for the Prophet which might be expected of a true Moslem.

So does Callapine, Bajazet's son. Callapine is aware of the cult practices he owes to Mahomet; he mentions sacrifices to be made to him (2T. 3.5.53-55). Nevertheless, one may detect in him a waning faith in the power of the Prophet. He is confident he may be victorious over Tamburlaine "If God or Mahomet send any aid" (2T. 5.2.11). The conditional and hypothetical aid suggests that he does not have the complete assurance that Mahomet will send help. The fate of his parents is too fresh in his mind. It acts as a constant reminder that Mahomet was not always solicitous towards his followers. Yet, he is still Mahomet's "obedient servant" (2T. 5.2.28) in spite of the fact that millions of Turks have perished at the hands of Tamburlaine. Amasia, a Turkish king, tries to build up his master's confidence by suggesting a vision of the Prophet bringing armed men to assist him (2T. 5.2.31-35). Yet, he adds, should he not receive the necessary help from Mahomet, the armies of Callapine are mighty enough to overcome Tamburlaine, even to resist God and Mahomet themselves (2T. 5.2.36-40). Amasia's faith in Mahomet is no more total and unreserved, if it ever was; there is room left for doubt. In this, Callapine is, or has become, realistic. Faith in the power of Mahomet is coloured by the disaster to which he has been a witness both in the fortunes of his family and in that of the armies of the Turks. He admits that Tamburlaine's victories have been great enough to discourage all his purposes (2T. 5.2.42-45).

Finally, there remains the attitudes of the Soldan to consider. Egypt was the stronghold of orthodox Islam in the days of Marlowe. As may be expected, the Soldan, defeated by Tamburlaine, does not hesitate to give full credit to God and Mahomet for all Tamburlaine's victories and power: "Mighty hath God and Mahomet made thy hand" (1T. 5.1.479). At the same time, in these words of the Soldan, one might perhaps detect a grateful sigh of relief for having been so honourably treated by his victor. After all, Tamburlaine has restored him his position in his own territories and his daughter is now queen of Persia. Tamburlaine's treatment of the Soldan is quite a contrast to that which he metes out to other royal characters in the play.

Thus, on the whole, Mahomet is the subject of a far greater veneration on the part of the Turks than he is for Tamburlaine and his followers. To the Turks, in spite of his serious failings, Mahomet is truly the Prophet, their religious leader and source of inspiration, at some time at least. Even after repeated defeats, the Turkish leaders are still turned towards their Prophet. Perhaps one could describe the attitudes of the Turks towards Mahomet to be rather a devotional one. Mahomet is still the centre of their religious devotion even though events do not prove that God and he have been immediately involved in their military enterprises or have intervened directly on their behalf in events of which they were the main actors. It is very obvious that the leaders of the Turks are never raised to a quasi-divinity almost equal or equal to Mahomet or God throughout the play. They all remain very human, left on their own with their own pathetic feelings of fear, uncertainty, anxiety, and misery. There is no exaltation of the Turk anywhere in the play. The pompous flattery addressed to Bajazet is undercut by forebodings of disaster which hover in the air. Of course, these distinctions would strike a note of approval on the part of the Elizabethans and probably Marlowe meant the reaction of the audience to be such. One must admit, however, that the portrait he makes of Tamburlaine the leader is of quite a different mettle and dimension.

The Sunnites, as we have seen, differed from the Shiites by their attitudes towards Mohammed, the Koran, and the Sunna, as well as by the concepts they had about the nature of their leaders and their respective roles. As implied before, an objective comparison between the idea of leadership among the Turks and that of the Persians is not possible from the material in the play. Critics agree that Marlowe has played down the prestige of the historical Bajazet considerably;[438] perhaps the dramatist was resorting to that device as a means of glorifying his hero at the expense of Bajazet's renown and fame.[439] Indeed, a study of the quality of Tamburlaine's leadership projects a picture quite different from that of Bajazet. In fact, many traits of Tamburlaine, the warring emperor, and of the manner with which he exercised authority strongly suggest the Persian concept of the imam, as described above, provided allowance is made for a progressive development of Tamburlaine's spiritual dimension in the play. The Tamburlaine of the second part of the play has considerably outgrown the obscure shepherd who first appeared on the scene even though there is a continuation in most aspects of Tamburlaine's personality.

There is no doubt whatever, that, as the play progresses, Tamburlaine does not hold himself indebted to Mahomet for any of his victories. Even his moments of grief occasioned by the illness and death of Zenocrate, or of setbacks when Callapine escapes from his captivity, are not interrupted by considerations of the place of Mahomet in these events. Calyphas's defection is a different matter, as has been seen before.[440] Tamburlaine either ignores Mahomet or is convinced of his superiority over him.. Theridamas, at one point, tries to arouse Olympia's interest by promising her she will meet Tamburlaine, a man greater than Mahomet (2T. 3.4.46).

---

438. See Ellis-Fermor, ed. cit., n. 240, p. 57.

439. See ibid., p. 56.

440. See above, pp. 224 and 316; see below, pp. 412 ff.

It would seem that, after Tamburlaine has developed his career along patterns, many of which seem modelled on those of Mahomet's career, he then openly turns against the Prophet. The antagonism Tamburlaine develops against Mahomet comes to a head in the scene of the burning of the Koran. Mahomet's inability to save his book in these circumstances, as he was unable to save Bajazet and the millions of Turks slain by Tamburlaine, shows that he is outdone by the Scythian. In fact, Tamburlaines initiatives and successes indicate that he enjoys superhuman prerogatives. Like the imams, he walks the earth like a god, unscathed, with the inner assurance that no physical harm will befall him; Jove is there to shield him from all blows (1T. 1.2.178-181). Imams were reputed to cast no shadows; they were at the zenith of creation - or devils, depending on one's views. Could Marlowe have implied this privilege when, already in the first part of the play, he makes Tamburlaine, the sun-god, boast that he has risen from the East and become fixed at the zenith point of the heavens (1T. 4.2.36-40)? Might not Tamburlaine be disporting himself as an imamite leader as great as, if not greater than, Mahomet?

Tamburlaine, the ruler, insists on the kind of unquestioning obedience expected by the imams. Tamburlaine's will is also absolute. There is no remission for anyone provoking Tamburlaine's displeasure, as Agydas finds out when he tries to draw Zenocrate away from Tamburlaine (1T. 3.2.1-106), or for anyone resisting his will, as Calyphas learns too late (2T. 4.1.76 ff.). Both pay with their lives. So do the besieged cities experience the inflexibility of Tamburlaine's decrees. If they refuse to yield, on the third day of the siege, they are all doomed to die (1T. 4.1.54-63).

In many ways, Tamburlaine's career has distinctive qualities which raise him above the norm of human limitations. His speeches are "woorking woordes"(1T. 2.3.25) according to Theridamas; events materialize as previously planned. Tamburlaine moves from one exploit to the next with the assurance of one who knows in advance that success will crown his initiatives. There is a suggestion of a penetrating insight into events and persons, which extends

beyond ordinary limits. He, a poor shepherd, knows immediately that Zenocrate will be his queen of Persia, that Theridamas will be his faithful ally to the end, while Cosroe is to be tolerated in as much as he is useful. Tamburlaine's judgment of situations and people, his victories, constant and repeated, impart the impression that a higher hand is guiding his steps and is arranging circumstances to his best advantage. Chroniclers have ever attributed a kind of divinely Messianic quality to Tamburlaine which Marlowe seems to have preserved. He mysteriously rises out of obscurity to restore order among the troops of Persia,[441] to revive the past glory of that country,[442] and to save the Christians from the oppression inflicted upon them by the Turks,[443] and suddenly he disappears from the scene when his mission has seemingly been completed. To some extent, he may be considered a heavenly-sent saviour or a deliverer for the Christians, as he certainly was in history for European Christendom,[444] a fact of which the Elizabethans were well aware. As he accomplishes his various missions, whether Tamburlaine identifies the aid he enjoys as the help of "smiling stars" (1T. 3.3.42 and 4.2.33), or the fulfilment of his mission as "Scourge of God",[445] it is clear that Tamburlaine transcends the ordinary human terms of existence, that he reaches out into the realms of the godly and possibly accedes to a place in the line of imams who have ruled Persia before him. A few instances in the play point to this idea.

---

441. Lack of discipline among the Persian troops before they were taken in command by Cosroe and then Tamburlaine is mentioned in the play: see 1T. 1.1.140 ff. The repeated victories of these same troops under the leadership of Tamburlaine imply he had restored military discipline in their ranks.

442. The idea that the power and glory of Persia had fallen into disrepute under the rule of Mycetes is present in the play: see 1T. 1.1.6 ff., 90-92, 113-122.

443. Tamburlaine's aim to free the Christians oppressed by the Turks is mentioned: see 1T. 3.3.44-58; 2T. 5.1.31-32.

444. See above, pp. 81-82, 83, 86, 118.

445. See below, pp. 446 ff. and 591 ff.

As Tamburlaine burns the Koran in Tamburlaine, Part II, he cries out to his soldiers: "Seek out another Godhead to adore" (2T. 5.1.199) instead of Mahomet. This implies that Mahomet might have been understood to be an incarnation of God as he, Ali, and his successors were believed to be by the Imamites of Persia. Marlowe does not go so far as to suggest that Tamburlaine will be the next godhead to replace Mahomet. That would have been too shocking to an Elizabethan audience and damning to the hero. But if Tamburlaine claims to be greater and stronger than the Prophet whom he qualifies as a Godhead, where does he rank himself? The implied divinity of Mahomet necessarily raises Tamburlaine above the realms of humanity.

There is no doubt that Marlowe wishes his hero to be among the deities. Tamburlaine needs no mediator on the part of Mahomet, the friend of God, for he is himself an intimate of the highest God, as the specially assigned "Scourge of God". After the defeat of Bajazet, he supposes Jove or the highest God to be in admiration over the exploits of their own messenger and scourge: "Let the majestie of heaven beholde / Their Scourge and Terrour treade on Emperours" (1T. 4.2.31-32). Like Ali and the imams, this "earthly god" is an intimate of divinity, a representative of the highest god, an implied incarnation of the Godhead, in whom may be detected God's own image and majesty. Tamburlaine is a divine hypostasis. He who resists Tamburlaine resists God himself (2T. 4.1.157-158).

Tamburlaine receives his instructions from on high. His ambitions have been instigated by "dreaming prophesies" (1T. 1.1.41), and he awaits a new sign to put an end to his deeds of horror as he explains to the horrified witnesses of the death of Calyphas:

> . . . til by vision, or by speach I heare
> Immortall Jove say, Cease my Tamburlaine.
> I will persist a terrour to the world.
> (2T. 4.1.198-200)

His ambitions are fed by the very spirit of Jove. He tells Jove that in him moves "an incorporeall spirit" (2T. 4.1.114), a soul "Made of the mould

whereof thy selfe consists, / Which makes me valiant, proud, ambitious" (2T. 4.1.115-116), ready to rise against Jove himself. Tamburlaine is heaven's choicest living fire (2T. 5.3.251). Finally, he hopes, as did the imams, that his sons will retain his spirit that it may live immortally in his posterity (2T 5.3.173-175).

As may be readily observed, Tamburlaine, as a king and ruler in the play, is a close replica of the Persian imamite ideal of the leader rather than the type of caliph of the Turks. Marlowe, it would seem, deliberately attempts to portray Tamburlaine in traits sharply in contrast to those of Bajazet. Apart from fulfilling the dramatic purpose of glorifying his hero, Marlowe would suggest the similar contrasts which existed between the Persian imam, or divine ruler, and the ruler of Turkey. Although it may be argued that there is nothing definite in the text to support the view that Marlowe was portraying his hero as a Persian imam, there are plenty of intimations to suggest that he wished his Tamburlaine to transcend the human limitations which show up the weaknesses of the individual as they do in the case of the Turkish Bajazet. In the characterization of his hero, Marlowe was possibly converging the image of Tamerlane the semi-deity of the European chronicles, of the popular notion of a Persian deified ruler, and of the revered idol of Timur's armies into one character. Marlowe's hero, to his own advantage, could comply with the expectations conjured up by these three images.

If Marlowe was knowledgeable in Islamic affairs, one may query as to why there are so few obvious descriptive details and pertinent allusions in the play. Apart from the occurrence of the words "Mahomet" and "Alcaron", of the references to Mahomet's shrine, his burial place, and the matter of being his kinsman, all of which amount to a sizeable amount, nevertheless, the dramatist does not get involved in technical details pertaining to that faith, at least in an obvious manner. Several of the references he makes were commonplace information to everyone. Perhaps, as was mentioned before, Marlowe avoided making his play a Moslem play altogether. One must remember

that he was writing for a Christian audience. He was also writing about a hero who was of interest to the Elizabethans for the historical role he had played in favour of the Christians of Europe. As was mentioned above, the legendary Tamerlane had been transformed to some extent with the years. Marlowe had to respect history and the sensitivity of his audience at the same time. Measure had to be used in the choice of Moslem traits to make his hero neither too Christian nor too Moslem but yet religious enough to make him true to the popular Tamerlane-image and compatible with the Elizabethans' expectations.

Thus, some Moslem elements present in Tamburlaine, Parts I and II have been pointed out in this section. While these do not constitute the total Moslem content of the play by any means, the ones noted so far are sufficiently numerous and pertinent to allow one to draw a few conclusions already. The examination of the action of the play and of the traits of his characters suggests that Marlowe was not alien to matters pertaining to Islam. Indeed, if the play is viewed against and within a Moslem context, the action and the characters acquire both depth and significance. Firstly, the Moslem elements Marlowe incorporated in his play help to create a Moslem world with a definite set of values open to a constant comparison and assessment on the part of the Christian Elizabethan spectator. This world provides a natural setting for the relentless warfare that Tamburlaine carries on. Battlefields and scenes of destruction were properly associated with Islam. Furthermore, because Moslem elements were first and foremost religious elements, their presence could create a religious atmosphere from which the characters derived dimension and significance. The religious nature of this Moslem setting for the play could not leave an Elizabethan audience indifferent from the first moments of its performance.

Secondly, the use Marlowe makes of these Islamic elements helps to differentiate the positions of his characters with respect to their allegiance

to Islam and, thereby with regard to each other. By the skilful handling of these elements in the play, Marlowe could present various sorts of Moslems, each with his own particular character and destiny. The dramatist could imply motives and justifications which eventually would spell out the dramatic fate of his characters. The audience would easily grasp the fact that although Tamburlaine and Bajazet both belonged to a Moslem context they were anything but identical. Apart from their respective dramatic status of victor and vanquished, Tamburlaine and Bajazet each develop an individuality which is derived mostly from the Moslem associations made with each. Most of the characters are great warriors in the play but their individual greatness and glory seems largely inversely proportional to their involvement with Islam. On the basis of the Islamic concepts studied in this chapter, an Elizabethan audience could have sorted out the characters roughly into two groups from their moral images as Moslems and thus would have sensed the basis upon which the tension of the action would be hinged. Marlowe properly conducted the play in such a way that the more dedicated Moslems met their doom at the hands of the less dedicated ones.

When Tamburlaine himself is examined against the Moslem concepts studied above, he acquires a depth and meaning which critics have been at a loss to define. His dramatic stature outlines itself with respect to his attitude to Mahomet and with respect to the particular kind of Islamic concepts prevalent in the geographical setting where he acts out his career. Tamburlaine's dramatic character viewed against the common knowledge about Mahomet suggests parallels which promote him as a new religious figure of the Moslem world. Tamburlaine's historians had already linked the two.[446] As a matter of fact, this association was probably quite natural to those familiar with the life of Mahomet as it was known or with the posthumous image zealous devotees had made of him. While Marlowe presents a Tamburlaine

---

446. See above, pp. 78, 82 ff.

unhampered by the restrictions imposed by the cult of Mahomet, his hero, nevertheless, embodies the idea of the Moslem Persian ruler. Persian Islamism offered many elements conducive to the creation of the superhuman hero Marlowe wished to present on the stage and, thereby, allowed the dramatist to supplement by inferences the scanty amount of genuinely dramatic material to be drawn from chronicles. Persian Islamism provided pertinent material for the creation of the semi-divine or divine leader he wished to portray. The immunity to error and physical harm in addition to the infallible instinct guiding the words and actions of a Persian imam: these were traits to incorporate into the dramatic image of an earthly god as Tamburlaine turns out to be.

Thus the figure of Mahomet provides two frames of reference or more against which the greatness of any subsequent Moslem leader was to be assessed: that of Mahomet, the man, a great one at that, and that of the posthumous spiritualized Mahomet. The Tamburlaine-Mahomet image invested Tamburlaine with greatness as a human hero. However, there was no limit to the spiritual dimensions of the Tamburlaine-imam figure. In time, these dimensions spanned the history of the world from the days of Adam to the last word of Mahomet's revelation. In space, they reached up to the very threshold of divinity. These two axes of reference stand out as the main norms against which Tamburlaine's greatness may be measured. The first governs the relentless zeal displayed in the eradication of the supreme evil of idolatry and the promotion of monotheism; the second inspires the holy wars and destruction carried out to promote the ideals of the first. These two considerations lead us to investigate the theme of idolatry in the play and the position and role of each of Marlowe's characters within the dramatic development of this theme.

Chapter 3

THE THEME OF IDOLATRY IN 'TAMBURLAINE'

One aspect of the play which has raised questions among Marlovian scholars is Tamburlaine's justification for treating Bajazet as he does. At first glance, the taunts and humiliations to which Tamburlaine subjects Bajazet seem uncalled for unless the mere elation of having won a victory over Bajazet, unsurpassed in scope and sensational in its effects as it seemed at the time, is deemed a sufficient argument to exonerate the victor. Moreover, Marlowe does not present Bajazet as a culprit laden with crimes crying out for justice except that Bajazet has oppressed the Christians of Asia Minor.[1] But how does this oppression compare with the stories of massive slaughters and wholesale destruction which become attached to Tamburlaine's reputation very soon after the fall of Bajazet (1T 4.1.49-63)? One might expect that Bajazet's arrogant boasts before his encounter with Tamburlaine (1T 3.1.21-31)[2] could draw the fires of heaven upon himself but are these boasts in reality more objectionable than the dreams of world-rule which Tamburlaine uses to win a following for himself (1T 1.2.38 ff.)? Moreover, Bajazet's role in the play is free from treacheries of the kind Tamburlaine uses to destroy Cosroe (1T 2.5.72 ff. and 2.7) when he no longer needs the help of the latter in his quest for the Persian crown. Or, one may ask, could there be any spiritual or divine justification for Tamburlaine's initiatives? But, again, by what religious, spiritual, or divine standards could one Moslem be justified in annihilating another Moslem? To the distant Elizabethan, removed from the immediate scene of Islam, it is doubtful whether the Moslem differences between Tamburlaine[3] and Bajazet would offer sufficient grounds for Tamburlaine's

---

1. See 1T 3.3.47-58. The extent of war that has gone on between the Christians and the Turks can be assessed from Gazellus's words: "We are all glutted with the Christians blood": 2T 1.1.14. Frederick refers to past encounters with Christians: see 2T 2.1.5-6.
2. See also 1T 3.3.93-95, 134-147.
3. Samuel C. Chew points out that Timur's historians uniformly made him a devout Mohammedan: see The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance (New York, 1937), p. 472. See also above, pp. 224 ff.

Chapter 3

THE THEME OF IDOLATRY IN 'TAMBURLAINE'

One aspect of the play which has raised questions among Marlovian scholars is Tamburlaine's justification for treating Bajazet as he does. At first glance, the taunts and humiliations to which Tamburlaine subjects Bajazet seem uncalled for unless the mere elation of having won a victory over Bajazet, unsurpassed in scope and sensational in its effects as it seemed at the time, is deemed a sufficient argument to exonerate the victor. Moreover, Marlowe does not present Bajazet as a culprit laden with crimes crying out for justice except that Bajazet has oppressed the Christians of Asia Minor.[1] But how does this oppression compare with the stories of massive slaughters and wholesale destruction which become attached to Tamburlaine's reputation very soon after the fall of Bajazet (1T 4.1.49-63)? One might expect that Bajazet's arrogant boasts before his encounter with Tamburlaine (1T 3.1.21-31)[2] could draw the fires of heaven upon himself but are these boasts in reality more objectionable than the dreams of world-rule which Tamburlaine uses to win a following for himself (1T 1.2.38 ff.)? Moreover, Bajazet's role in the play is free from treacheries of the kind Tamburlaine uses to destroy Cosroe (1T 2.5.72 ff. and 2.7) when he no longer needs the help of the latter in his quest for the Persian crown. Or, one may ask, could there be any spiritual or divine justification for Tamburlaine's initiatives? But, again, by what religious, spiritual, or divine standards could one Moslem be justified in annihilating another Moslem? To the distant Elizabethan, removed from the immediate scene of Islam, it is doubtful whether the Moslem differences between Tamburlaine[3] and Bajazet would offer sufficient grounds for Tamburlaine's

---

1. See 1T 3.3.47-58. The extent of war that has gone on between the Christians and the Turks can be assessed from Gazellus's words: "We are all glutted with the Christians blood": 2T 1.1.14. Frederick refers to past encounters with Christians: see 2T 2.1.5-6.
2. See also 1T 3.3.93-95, 134-147.
3. Samuel C. Chew points out that Timur's historians uniformly made him a devout Mohammedan: see The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance (New York, 1937), p. 472. See also above, pp. 224 ff.

treatment of the Turk except that Tamburlaine had helped the Christians by destroying Bajazet. Or, could it be that the fate of fellow-Christians in the distant lands of Islam stirred the emotions of the Elizabethan spectators to such a pitch that any criminal or violent act committed for the cause of the Christians' liberation from the tyrannical yoke of the Turks became acceptable? Perhaps the names "Bajazet" or "the Great Turk" carried with them such a degree of odium that any treatment of any Turk was justified in itself. If this was so, as one writer on the period explains,[4] the Elizabethans would relish with glee the sight of the Great Turk reduced to grovelling on the ground in his function as a footstool or being led on a leash and fed like a cur. At last, even in the make-believe world of the stage, the Turk was getting his due. Or, again, could the lack of experience as a playwright have incited Marlowe to resort to this means, somewhat simplistic to say the least, of glorifying his hero at the expense of the victim?[5]

Instead of accusing Marlowe, on the basis of first-hand evidence or of the lack of it, of having written a play whose dramatic structure is apparently wanting in coherence,[6] or instead of trying to excuse Marlowe's supposed shortcomings as a dramatist by recalling his lack of experience,[7]

---

4. See Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 107.

5. Chew says that the dramatic character of Tamburlaine in Marlowe's play would have been enhanced had Bajazet been presented as "worthy of his steel": see op. cit., n. 3, p. 472. U.M. Ellis-Fermor believes that, by playing down Bajazet, Marlowe wishes the audience to grant an undivided sympathy to "the power of Tamburlaine's single brain": see Tamburlaine the Great in Two Parts (London, 1930), p. 40.

6. Ellis-Fermor mentions that much has been said about the formlessness of the play. She adds that the play lacks "that clear shaping of its material which itself constitutes a great part of a dramatist's interpretation": see ed. cit., n. 5, p. 55.

7. Ellis-Fermor claims that to harmonize the pathos, with which Mexia invested Bajazet, and Tamburlaine's masterfulness without mere brutality, his aspiration without mere insolence, his progress without crude destruction and "unchivalric self-glorification" was beyond Marlowe's strength: see ed. cit., n. 5, p. 48. Later she speaks of Marlowe's immaturity: see ibid., p. 49.

one may be wiser to search the text itself for these answers keeping in mind, at the same time, the historical, religious, and intellectual contexts for which the play was written. One must remember that a play centred on the topics of Turks and Moslem would have had an altogether stronger and more meaningful impact on an Elizabethan audience than it would have on a present-day one. Issues which were live topics then have lost their dynamic power of stirring feelings and emotions in our contemporary Western world. One such issue, which was of interest both to the Moslem and to the Elizabethan Christian of Marlowe's days and which might hold a more prominent place in the play than has hitherto been acknowledged, is that of idolatry. This chapter, therefore, will examine the place and importance which idolatry held in the religious consciousness of the Elizabethans and how the awareness of this evil might explain the reaction of Marlowe's contemporaries to his drama. The idolatrous elements and associations which Marlowe has incorporated in his play with respect to Bajazet, to the Turks, and to Tamburlaine himself, will be studied. Finally, in the light of the elements of idolatry associated with each, the moral and religious image of Tamburlaine as opposed to those of his antagonists will be assessed with the hope that Tamburlaine's position in the play may emerge in its true dramatic light.

Elizabethan Christians and Moslems were both, each in a particular manner, concerned about the evil of idolatry. While to the Moslem, as was seen before,[8] idolatry was the supreme insult to the one God Allah which impelled him, by vocation, to promote monotheism at all and any cost,[9] to the Elizabethans familiar with the Biblical text, as we have every reason to believe they were, the long story of the wars, disasters, and extermination-nations which fills so many pages of the Old Testament, was in the main that

---

8. See above, p. 149, n. 47; p. 156, n. 81.

9. Muhammad Hamidullah describes the Islamic assessment of idolatry as "la plus abominable folie des humains": see Le Prophète de l'Islam (Paris, 1959), p. 495.

of the struggle of monotheistic Israel against the idolatry[10] of its neighbouring nations.[11] While the Elizabethan's commitment to the cause of monotheism was not as violently militant as was the Moslem's, it was, nevertheless, very real. In case the Elizabethans should fail to grasp the grave character of this evil, the editors of the Bishops and the Geneva Bibles made it their duty to instil the idea into them. Idolatry was very much on the minds of these editors as one may judge from the number and the nature of the many commentaries they included with the Biblical text. Idolatry was the chief evil;[12] it was included among those Israel should eradicate if they wished to avert the disasters about to befall on them. For, Isaiah "first condemned their superstition and idolatrie: next their couetousness and thirdly, their vaine trust in worldelie meanes".[13] Other evils were defined in terms of idolatry. Pride was "chiefely idolatrie in false religion and wantonnesse and vanitie in lyfe".[14] Its despicable nature was emphasized: "All ye

---

10. Idolatry in the Old Testament was sometimes defined as either the worship of heathen idols with the evils connected with this worship or the worship of Jehovah by means of images because of the great difficulty of believing in an unseen, spiritual God: see OCC. p. 157.

11. Almost every book in the Bible deals with the problem of idolatry in some form. The God of Jacob is obviously altogether different from the gods of Laban: see Gen. 31:30 ff. Several laws of the Decalogue forbid the use of images as a safeguard for Israel against the influence of the neighbouring peoples: see Exod. 20:3 ff. The march of Israel was prinicipally against nations known to be idolatrous: see Num. 21. Israel is destined to be separated from the other nations around it on the basis of the worship of the true God as opposed to that of gods: see Deut. 7. Joshua summarizes the history of Israel before he dies; the main problem central to this history is idolatry: see Josh. 24. The problem comes up again in Judges: see 10. The struggle between Israel and the Philistines is mainly one between monotheistic Israel and those who are not followers of the God of Israel: see 1 Sam. 4. David reminds his people that they were redeemed "from Egypt, from the nations and their gods": see 2 Sam. 7:23. And so, one could trace through almost all of the books of the Old Testament either episodes of Israel's fight against idolatrous nations or references to those episodes. In the New Testament, see Acts 7:40 ff. 1 Thess. 1:8-9; Rev. 2:14; etc.

12. See B.V., Ecclus. 49:4, n. (a).

13. G.V., Isa. 2:7, n. (p).

14. B.V., Ecclus. 10:7, n. (a).

idolaters, which thogh you seme to haue neuer so muche worldelie dignitie, yet in Gods sight you are vile and abject".[15] Idolatry in all its forms drew the judgment of God upon the guilty. "The causes why God forsaketh his people is idolatrie, heathenishe superstition, couetousnesse and trust in other thinges then in God alone".[16] One could go on quoting similar commentaries found in these two Bibles. Obviously, a great effort was being made to convince the Elizabethans of the ominous doom hanging over the heads of those guilty of this evil. It is little surprising to find that the Elizabethans, who were familiar with the Holy Writ and the notes which accompanied it, became highly sensitized to the evils of idolatry. They were ever ready to use the word to justify their punitive attitudes, to condemn those who differed in creed and practices, and to hold idolatry as the evil to be avoided or eradicated at all cost wherever it was believed to exist. Idols had to be destroyed to make way for the kingdom of God, and the idolatrous had to suffer the well-deserved punishments for their idolatrous cults.

Added to this view and to the understanding of the evil of idolatry acquired from their familiarity with the texts of the Old Testament, the Elizabethans felt they were entrusted with a very special mission, that of eradicating a host of supposedly perverse practices and customs. These, in general, were linked with the Roman Catholic faith which was considered to be a Babylon of idolatry.[17] Elizabethans condemned the cult of images and

---

15. G.V., Isa. 45:20, n. (y).

16. B.V., Isa. 2:6, n. (b).

17. The English churches were said to enjoy a recovery of liberty since they had come out of the "spirituall Babylon, which is the Romish Synagogue": see Richard Woodcoke, A Godly and Learned Answer, To a lewd and vnlearned Pamphlet: Intitvled, A few, plaine and forcible Reasons for the Catholike Faith, against the Religion of the Protestants (London, 1608), p. 7. Robert Abbot, in a sermon preached in 1596, entitled The Exaltation of the kingdome and Priesthood of Christ (London, 1601), sees a "direct opposition betwixt Christianitie and Popery" and thanks God for being now delivered from the tyranny of the sceptre of Antichrist, that is, the Pope and his superstitions: see p. 25.

statues,[18] the use of bells[19] and many other rites which they considered idolatrous. Because these practices impeded one's living of the true religion, they had to be expunged. Elizabethans were frequently reminded of their duty, either by homilies[20] or by regulations put into effect by the sover-

---

18. Against the use of images in churches as objects to be venerated or against the "worship of images", see Thomas Morton, A Preamble vnto An Incovnter with P.R. the Avthor of the deceitfull Treatise of Mitigation: Concerning the Romish doctrine both in question of Rebellion and of Aequiuocation (London, 1608), pp. 54 ff. Thomas Beard believed that the Byzantine emperors were punished by the iconoclastic Turks for having readmitted images into their churches: see The Theatre of Gods Judgements, ed. 1631, pp. 157 ff., mentioned in Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 119 and n. 2. Images were credited with miraculous powers: see Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England (London, 1971), p. 27.

19. "Bells in popery haue been and yet be ... much abused": see Thomas Sparke, A Brotherly Perswasion to Vnitie, and Vniformitie in ivdgment and Practise tovching the Received and present Eccesiasticall /sic/ gouernment, and the authorised rites and ceremonies of the Church of England (London, 1607), p. 40. Bells, because they were consecrated were believed to have power against evil spirits, thunder and lightning, storms: see Thomas, op. cit., n. 18, pp. 31, 49, 52 ff. and 73-74.

20. Much homiletic literature, and other literature as well, refers to supposedly past practices of Popes, to their treading on the necks of kings, to kings kissing their feet and their legates' knees. These practices were considered as evil as the ritual of Baal's priests, that of lancing their own flesh which was considered idolatrous: see Woodcoke, op. cit., n. 17, p. 32. See also ibid., p. 100. The same author refers to the "stage play" of the Mass: see p. 101. Elsewhere Woodcoke says that papists are associated with idolatry for

> they draw vnto them all the sonnes of Belial, whom they can intise out of all protestant kingdomes and states, to make continuall imployment of them, to worke the subuersion of their natiue Countries, to infect with butcherly and Scithian crueltie the mindes of subiects, by desperate furies to driue men to infamous and vntimely temporall deaths, and to eternall damnation, not caring what become of their bodies or soules so their turnes be serued:

see ibid., pp. 112-113. The invocation of saints, according to some, was not expressed in the Old Testament nor in the Gospel because of the danger of idolatry. To rely on the unwritten word to approve such practices was "to follow fables in steed of truth": see Iohn Panke, The Fall of Babel (Oxford, 1608), sig. b 3 v - b 4. See also Robert Abbot, A Mirrour of Popish Svbtilties: ... (London, 1594), who speaks of the Jewish and heathenish ceremonies of Poperie: see p. 11. George Abbot, in An Exposition vpon the Prophet Ionah (London, 1600), a series of sermons preached in Oxford from 1594-1599, describes how various nations of the Gentiles had their own gods; for example, fire was the god of the Persians, Dagon of the Philistines, Astaroth of the Sidonians, etc. He ends by saying that the same goes for the saints in the Church of

(continued overleaf ...)

reign;[21] they must be zealous in the interests of the true faith. Anyone engaged in the eradication of idolatry was fulfilling a role in covenant of the New Testament parallel to the one Israel had exercised under the covenant of the Old Testament. It was then but an easy transfer for the English to make and to identify their mission with that of Israel.

In this light England became another Israel. Sixteenth-century preachers often assimilated the events and the people of Israel's history to the state of England. They applied the exhortations and lamentations of the prophets related to Jerusalem, Sodom and Nineveh, to England.[22] In a sermon preached on 24th March 1608, the day of James I's inauguration, John King speaks of England as of another Israel.[23] Robert Horne urges his congregation

---

20. Continued ..... Rome: see ibid., pp. 72 ff. and 76. Elsewhere he preaches against the use of beads: see ibid., pp. 286 ff. On the use of holy candles, see Thomas, op. cit., n. 18, p. 32; on the value of prayers in general, see ibid., p. 42; on the use of holy water, see ibid., p. 55; on the rituals used in administering sacraments, see ibid., p. 57; on the use of beads, see ibid., p. 57; on other customs, see ibid., pp. 61ff.

21. On an Edwardian statute of 1547 against the use of bells, see Thomas, op. cit., n. 18, p. 53. On an Elizabethan statute requiring the removal of altars and their replacement with tables, see G.W. Prothero, ed., Select Statutes and Other Constitutional Documents Illustrative of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I (Oxford, 1894), p. 190. The Convocation of 1563 stipulated the following: "That in ministering the sacrament of baptism the ceremony of making the cross in the child's forehead may be omitted, as tending to superstition": see ibid., p. 191. The same Convocation banned the use of organs in the churches: see ibid. The Queen issued an injunction in 1559 forbidding the " wandering of pilgrimages, setting up of candles, praying upon beads, or such like superstition, [incurring] not only no promise of reward in Scripture, but contrariwise great threatenings and maledictions of God": ibid., p. 185. Also, in the same group of injunctions, Elizabeth decreed that "to the intent that all superstition and hypocrisy crept into divers men's hearts may vanish away, they shall not set forth or extol the dignity of any images, relics or miracles": ibid., pp. 184-185. Processions were also forbidden: see ibid., p. 186. Elizabeth also ordered that the parsons, etc.,

> take away ... and destroy all shrines, ... paintings, and all other monuments of feigned miracles, pilgrimages, idolatry and superstition, so that there remain no memory of the same in walls, glass windows, or elsewhere within their churches and houses:

ibid., p. 186.

22. Millar MacLure, The Paul's Cross Sermons: 1534-1642 (Toronto, 1958), p. 151. See also ibid., p. 173.

23. John King, A Sermon preached at Oxford the 24 of March 1608 (Oxford, 1608), pp. 2, 21, 24 and 25.

in the following words in which Christ is referred to as the "day-starre":

> Let vs of christian England, to whom this day-starre of the gospel hath so long appeared, and in such glorie and brightnes, vnder the two Sunnes of Q. Elisabeth, of infinite worthy memory, and of our dread Soueraign, K. Iames now liuing, and the happines of our land, and the glory of all Christendom: let vs (I say) the Christians of happy England follow, to wit, in obedience, this star of the Worde to the house where Christ is borne ...[24]

Harold Fisch wonders how, when the English Bible was placed in the hands of all by the Reformation, the English Protestants could fail to identify themselves with the Israel of old and not wish to destroy the idols of the heathen, break down their altars, or do vengeance to their enemies.[25] Their battle was carried over into the political arena and brought about a sort of theocracy.[26] The England-Israel analogy went back at least to John Foxe's Book of Martyrs. Pamphleteers and pulpit orators before and after the Spanish Armada compared political events in England to Biblical episodes. London was another Jerusalem. The analogy was to be given special importance by Milton on through the days of Dryden.[27]

Numerous allusions presented the English nation as the people of God devoted to the cause of building up a new spiritual Jerusalem[28] which would

---

24. Robert Horne, Of the Rich Man and Lazarvs (London, 1619), p. 139.

25. See Harold Fisch, Jerusalem and Albion: The Hebraic Factor in Seventeenth-Century Literature (London, 1964), pp. 104-106.

26. See ibid., pp. 258-259. See also Thomas, op. cit., n. 18, pp. 91-92.

27. Milton held similar opinions about the mission of England. As Fisch says, "For him, England was a Covenant-nation having tasks and opportunities similar in detail to those of Israel of old": op. cit., n. 25, p. 113. In the course of the seventeenth century, the Puritans were to develop an especially strong sense of mission and a fanatical zeal to erect the holy community: see ibid., p. 118. One may suppose that this zeal had had a long-term preparation and had probably taken root in the age of Elizabeth. Fisch adds that for Milton, the sacred community was first and foremost the Engliah people chosen to be "the heralds of salvation for the human race". It was the Covenant idea combined with Renaissance nationalism: see ibid., p. 123. During the Renaissance, the Hebraic sense of the Divine penetrated classical mythology: see ibid., pp. 128 ff.; physical science: see ibid., pp. 212 ff.; and the sense of history: see ibid., p. 219.

28. Ever since the Middle Ages, the English had been more concerned about the soul's wayfaring to the Celestial city of Jerusalem by bodily

(continued overleaf ....)

be free of these evils. As the men of Israel had been recruited to fight against the evil that surrounded them, so, according to the preacher Roger Hacket in 1590, were the Englishmen enlisted to fight for their faith, the war with Spain being such an instance.[29] Thomas Adams described his compatriots as "the people of England devout like those of Israell ...".[30] Robert Abbot saw the English as the army of God or Christ, the captain, engaged in the fight for true religion.[31] Christ, to the English, was "our captain Jesus Christ".[32] The Covenant idea was combined with Renaissance nationalism.[33] The leaders of this English nation were new personifications of the Biblical heroes. Elizabeth's place in Christendom was often exalted to the highest realms. She was spoken of as

> that glorious Saint, ..., a woman after Gods heart, who walkt in the waies, and ouerliued the daies of hir father Dauid, and led hir people as a flock forty and fiue yeares through a wildernes of many distresful dangers: a Queene of Queenes, (...) the miracle of the christian, and the mark and scope euen of the infidel world, (for they had an eie after hir) ...[34]

One can easily detect the Biblical undertones in this description of Elizabeth. Other Biblical associations were made to clarify her role and position: she was a child to a "David", a leader of her flock through a wilderness of many trials like Moses had been. George Whetstones claims she enjoyed special divine protection from poisoning and magic, and evoked similar instances in

---

28. Continued ..... discipline than in the physical pilgrimage to the Holy Lands. Chew mentions that the theme occurs again and again in the exemplum in the parochial sermon, in Dante's poem and in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, for instance, in the Parson's Prologue, in Elizabethan hymns, in the allegory of The Pilgrim's Progress, etc.: see op. cit., n. 3, pp. 70 ff.

29. See MacLure, op. cit., n. 22, p. 71.

30. Thomas Adams, The White Devill or the Hypocrite vncased: ... (London, 1615), p. 14.

31. See op. cit., n. 17, pp. 37-38.

32. See ibid., p. 42.

33. See Fisch, op. cit., n. 25, p. 123.

34. John King, A Sermon Preached in Oxon.: 5th November 1607 (Oxford, n.d.), p. 22.

the Old Testament to support his claims.[35] According to him, Elizabeth's mission was to set forth God's glory and to banish idolatry.[36] Throughout one of his sermons, John King refers to Elizabeth as David[37] and James I as Solomon.[38] Many more allusions could be used to support the Biblical image of English sovereigns engaged in the fight against idolatry.[39]

In view of this, one wonders whether Marlowe interspersed throughout the play elements which might reflect, first of all, the Elizabethan's awareness of the presence of supposedly idolatrous practices in his society and, secondly, the Elizabethan's consciousness of playing a special role in freeing the Christians from superstitious beliefs and practices prevalent in their day. The presence of such elements in the play might explain how the Elizabethan spectator could, at least on spiritual and religious grounds, accept, applaud, and even acclaim the "barbarous and bloody Tamburlaine"

---

35. George Whetstones, The English Myrror ... (London, 1586), p. 145. See also ibid., pp. 152 ff. and 167.

36. See ibid., p. 172.

37. See op. cit., n. 23, pp. 2, 21 and 24.

38. See ibid., pp. 2, 21, 25, 26 and 28.

39. The reigning sovereign was most often seen as a Biblical hero fighting for the good cause. In 1569, Bishop Jewel, in a sermon preached upon the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession, explained that the fall of Jericho was a type of the fall of the power of darkness which was Rome. The Queen was "a new Joshua": see MacLure, op. cit., n. 22, p. 59. Full-scale attacks upon Rome were staged more as a means of defining the position of the Anglican religion than to fight off a danger. John Dyos, an austere Puritan gospeller, in a sermon delivered in 1579, reflects the thought that inspired the militancy of the time. He saw the Church as shaken by "Turkes, Jewes, Anabaptistes, Libertines, Sectaries, Atheistes, Schismatikes, the Familie of Love, the Romishe rable, and to be short the devill and all his members". He set forth to prove that Rome is not the true Church, that the Pope is Antichrist, and that Rome is Babylon: see ibid., p. 65. Elizabeth was likened to David: see ibid., p. 68. She was was also a Deborah in the service of God: see ibid., p. 70. After the victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588, the jubilant English preachers could compare Elizabeth to the heroes of Israel: see ibid., p. 71. Whetstones recalls how Elizabeth, on the day of her coronation, compared herself to Daniel delivered from the lions: see op. cit., n. 35, p. 131. He later compares her to Deborah also: see ibid., p. 132. J.D. Mackie, in The Earlier Tudors: 1485-1558 (Oxford, 1962 reprinted edition) entitled the chapter on Edward VI "The Young Josiah": see p. 478.

(1T 2.7.1 and 2T 5.1.133). One may ask why Marlowe did not make these elements more obvious in the play. Perhaps to an Elizabethan, already fluent in Biblical scripture, such elements were evident. Furthermore, Marlowe had to incriminate the Moslem Bajazet as opposed to the Moslem Tamburlaine convincingly for the audience. A critical Elizabethan, supposedly, would not have entirely removed Tamburlaine from his world of Islam, a world which, except for a few details accepted by the Elizabethans,[40] was itself categorized as heathen and idolatrous. Marlowe, consequently, had to preserve some Islamic traits in his hero and yet keep a delicate balance between the opportune orthodoxy he wished to integrate in the dramatic character of his Moslem Tamburlaine and the idolatry of the Moslem Bajazet. This Marlowe seems to have tried to do by skilfully using elements either idolatrous in nature or related to idolatry in some way. It may be pointed out that Marlowe did not have to travel far nor read much before he would encounter such ideas.

Because the struggle between Islam and Christendom was rooted in differences in creeds and the modes of expressing these creeds,[41] it was quite natural to expect contemporary literature to refer rather frequently to the Biblical wars against idolatry when it treated of the struggles of the Christians against Islam.[42] As has been seen before, Christians, either living

---

40. The Turks' civility was reputed to be better than that of Europeans: see Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 53. "It were a shame to send Christians to schoole to learne honest dealing of Turkes, and yet they boast that we are a fourme beneath them for honest and square dealing": see Ier. Dyke, A Covnterpoyson against Couetousness, a Sermon preached at Pauls Crosse, May 23. 1619 (London, 1620), p. 58. Elizabeth shared the Moslem's detestation of the worshippers of idols, that is, of the Roman Catholics: see Chew, op. cit., n. 3, pp. 152 and 200, n. 1. The Elizabethans also shared the Moslem's hatred for bells: see ibid., pp. 196-197. Moslems believed "there is a devil in every bell": see Alfred Guillaume, The Traditions of Islam (Oxford, 1924), p. 118.

41. See Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 200 and n. 1, and p. 397.

42. The Greek emperor encourages his men to face the Turks in 1142 by comparing them to the Israelites crossing the Red Sea: see Richard Knolles, The Generall Historie of the Turkes ... (London, 1603), p. 33. Knolles draws several parallels from the Bible to describe the struggle of the Christians with the Turks. At one point, the mind of the Turkish Sultan

(continued overleaf.....)

under the fear and threat of the Turks in Europe or directly oppressed by them in Moslem lands, easily identified themselves with Israel. In the same way that God's people had been at grips with the rest of their contemporary neighbours on issues related to idolatry, so were now the Christians at odds with Islam on similar issues. The oppressed Christian perceived his situation as that of another Israel held in Babylonian captivity.[43] He easily equated his oppressors with the villains of the Old Testament. Thus, the Turk could be a Nabuchadnezzar[44] of Babylon, a Sennacherib[45] of Assyria, or a Pharaoh[46] of Egypt. When the Turk's cruelty and indiscriminate bloodshed was uppermost in the mind of the Christian, then the Turk became another Herod.[47] All these Biblical tyrants were recognized as idolaters[48] as were the Turks in

---

42. Continued ..... is turned "as in times past /David/ by Husai ouerthrew the counsell of Achitophell and changed the mind of Absolon to follow such aduise as should bring him to destruction": ibid., pp. 41-42.

43. Knolles applies the words of the Prophet to Israel in captivity to the plight of the Christians at the hands of the Turks. He borrows the laments of Jeremiah to voice the misery of the Christians: see op. cit., n. 42, Indvction to the Christian Reader (unpaginated).

44. The Turkish enemy is identified as "this Babylonian Nabugadnezar": see Thomas Newton, A Notable Historie of the Saracens ... (London, 1575), sig. A iii v.

45. Biblical tyrants were easily identified with the enemies of the Christians. After the defeat of the Spanish Armada, Philip II was compared to Sennacherib by Thomas White: see MacLure, op. cit., n. 22, p. 71. James's deliverance from the Powder Plot is compared to Hezekiah's from Sennacherib: see ibid., p. 98. Philip II of Spain, in his Spanish Armada venture of 1588, is again compared to Sennachrib attacking "Gods Queen": see Horne, op. cit., n. 24, p. 63.

46. The Moslem threat is identified as "Turkish Pharaoh": see Newton, op. cit., n. 44, sig. A iiii. Whetstones speaks of "Pharao the Pope": see op. cit., n. 35, p. 175.

47. George Abbot sketches the image of cruelty his contemporaries associated with Herod. "The name of Herode the great, is very odious". He tells how, when he died, Herod gave express order that one member of every noble family in his kingdom should be slain: see op. cit., n. 20, p.124. Robert Abbot classes tyrants and persecutors of Christ and his Church as Herods, Pilates, Neroes, Diocletians, etc.: see op. cit., n. 17, p. 15.

48. Differences in religious beliefs was the main reason why Israel had to resist being absorbed by the nations led by those tyrants. This resistance could easily provoke these tyrants into believing they should oppress Israel.

the minds of the Christians. Nations holding fort against the Islamic onslaught thereby became another Israel. Their battles against the Turks became types of David-Goliath episodes,[49] the outcome of which the Christians were forever hoping to be as happy as had been for David the fight against Goliath. On the one hand, the gigantism of Goliath,[50] his superhuman and apparently invincible strength were easily likened to the vast innumerable armies of the Turks[51] which no one seemed able to defeat. On the other hand, Christians could hope to become new Davids someday when, like him, they most unexpectedly would be blessed with a victory over the Turks in spite of their weaknesses and scanty resources. It was their constant belief that God helped "the few in number"[52] when these were engaged in a fight for the sake of righteousness,[53] as Europeans believed they were. In this perspective of a righteous struggle, whether they were engaged actively against the evils of idolatry within the shores of their country or psychologically carrying it out against the distant pagans of Islam, the English perceived themselves as the nation elect of

---

49. Oppositions centred on religious issues were often paralleled to the struggles of Jews against Jebusites, of Isaac against Ismael, of Jacob against Esau: see Morton, op. cit., n. 18, pp. 37 ff. See also François de Belle-Forest, Harengves militaires ... (Paris, 1573), p. 1259.

50. The Turks are compared to "l'effroyable monstre gigantin Goliath": see De Belle-Forest, op. cit., n. 49, p. 1259.

51. Multitudes of men, incorruptible military discipline, infinite resources, formidable power and organization were always associated with the Turks: see Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 110.

52. The fewness in number of the Christians with connotations of God's blessing upon them as compared to the multitudes of Turks they must fight is a frequent theme of Renaissance literature. It is present in De Belle-Forest's collection of military harangues: see op. cit., n. 49, pp. 1259-1260.

53. The arguments Frederick and his colleagues use to convince themselves they are justified in breaking their pledge with Orcanes reflect this attitude: see 2T 2.1.47-63. Note especially lines 47-48, 56-59 and 62-63.

divine Providence.[54] "Little England",[55] as it was affectionately called, readily credited itself with the privilege of being God's England,[56] divinely protected from enemies without[57] and totally dedicated to the eradication of Christendom's major enemy within. Leaders engaged in this fight were comparable to God's Biblical warriors fighting for the spread of the kingdom of God.[58]

If the leader of the Turks was likened to a Pharaoh, then his antagonists were easily identified with the opponents of Pharaoh, with Israel. The very name Israel evoked a long line of humble shepherd-warriors, of leaders like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, and others, all of them engaged against idolatrous forces. It evoked straggly nomadic tribes carrying forth the standard of the kingdom of God against rich, powerful, highly sophisticated, well-oraganized military machines,[59] and challenging seemingly insurmountable

---

54. Elizabeth was considered to be like the Queen of Sheba prefiguring the faithful in Christ and the body of the elect incarnate; her safety was a matter of religious care: see MacLure, op. cit., n. 22, p. 68. By extension, so was the English nation a body elect. See also Thomas, op. cit., n. 18, p. 91. See also above, pp. 247 ff.

55. Whetstones, op. cit., n. 35, p. 53. Whetstones also calls his country a "little realm": see ibid., Dedicatory to the Nobility; and "little Iland": see ibid., p. 118. Horne sees his country as "happy England": see op. cit., n. 24, p. 139. See also above, p. 248.

56. The English preachers, at this time, were imbued with a "patriotic messianism" which led Bishop Aylmer (or his printer) to proclaim that "God is English": see MacLure, op. cit., n. 22, p. 141. See also ibid., p. 173. See also above, p. 248 and n. 27.

57. Bishop King saw the history of the Jews as relived in the history of England, both enjoying the providential care and love of God: see MacLure, op. cit., n. 22, p. 152. George Abbot shows how God used tempests to destroy the Spanish fleet and save England: see op. cit., n. 20, p. 46. Whetstones, in his dedicatory word to the nobility, enumerates his purposes in writing his book, one of which is to show the work of the mighty providence of God,"in defending this little Realme from sundrie the assaultes" of furious enemies: see op. cit., n. 35; see also pp. 118-119. See also Thomas, op. cit., n. 18, pp. 91-92.

58. See above, p. 248, n. 28; see below, p. 257 and n. 68.

59. Two prindipal enemies of Israel were the Egyptians and the Assyrians. Excavations have revealed that, at the time of Joseph, the Egyptians were a highly organized social group possessing "treasure cities" or brickwalled towns with vast store-chambers of brick: see OCC. p. 98. They pursued Moses and the Israelites with chariots and horses, a detail which supposes a well-organised army: see Exod. 14. The history of the Assyrian power, the cradle of the civilisation of Western Asia, begins

(continued overleaf .....)

odds. Indeed, one could readily observe that, in principle, the Tamburlaine-Bajazet confrontation was not far removed from the Israel-Pharaoh one. The name Israel evoked troops especially blessed by God and victorious in battle engagements even when their numbers were few.[60] It evoked the frequently renewed promise that they would become as numerous as the stars of the sky[61] and the sands of the sea,[62] that they should cover the earth as a world-wide blessing.[63] On the other hand, the opponents of Israel, whether they were identified with Pharaohs, Nabuchadnezzars, or Sennacheribs, conjured up images of wealth, power, and prestige, of huge armies[64] holding sway over the world, as it was then known, being inexplicably shattered by small bands of Jews or mysteriously overpowered by deadly and traumatizing fears.[65] The Biblical struggle against idolatry recalled the succession of plagues gradually eroding the Pharaoh's adamant will to destroy Israel.[66] Thus, one might conclude that the overall picture of the Biblical world with respect to the problem of idolatry conveyed a twofold image. On the one hand, it offered the view of simple

---

59. Continued ..... in prehistoric times. These grew in power and were responsible for the captivity of Israel: see 2 Kgs. 25; 2 Chr. 36; etc. They convey an image of power: see OCC. pp. 21-22.

60. The idea of fewness in number to face the many is several times associated with Israel either in the Biblical text itself or in notes explaining the text. The Bishops Bible notes that God gave victory to the smaller number led by Abraham when he marched against the enemy to face his brother: see Gen. 14:9, n. (f). This incident is again referred to in 1 Chr. 16:19. The idea of Israel being the "few in number" is again mentioned: see Gen. 34:30; Deut. 4:27; 7:7; Ps. 105: 12-14.

61. See Gen. 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; Deut. 1:10; 10:22; 28:62; 1 Chr. 27:23; etc. See also Ecclus. 44:21; Song of Three Children 1:36; Heb. 11:12.

62. See Gen. 32:12; 41:49; Josh. 11:4; etc. See also Ecclus. 1:2; Song of Three Children 1:36; Heb. 11:12; etc.

63. See Gen. 13:16; 28:14; Ecclus. 44:21; etc.

64. Idolatrous nations in the Bible are often presented in vast multitudes: see 1 Macc. 3:17; 5:6; 2 Macc. 8:20; etc.

65. Cf. "The fear of God fell upon the cities that were round about them": Gen. 35:5 and IT 4.4.3-4. See also Exod. 15:16; 23:27; Deut. 2:25; etc. See below, p. 265.

66. See Exod. 7-11.

warring bands blessed by God when they were engaged in the interests of the kingdom of God; on the other hand, one perceived vast pagan nations being shattered and beaten in encounters with Israel, undergoing a fate which humanly speaking defied all their expectations of triumph. Are there any allusions in the play which might reflect this picture?

From the outset, Bajazet's troops are introduced in a most unfavourable light. Because of the implied Biblical inferences, which an Elizabethan audience could easily have detected, Morocus's choice of phrases to describe his master's army is most unfortunate. In words that are meant to suggest Bajazet's vast military resources, Morocus describes Bajazet's troops as follows:

> The spring is hindred by your smoothering host,
> For neither rain can fall upon the earth,
> Nor Sun reflexe his vertuous beames thereon,
> The ground is mantled with such multitudes.
> (1T 3.1.50-53)

This passage seems to portray Bajazet and his troops as a most pervasive presence banning all forms of beneficial influence of which the "vertuous beames" of the sun would be a symbol. Furthermore, in words which are meant to flatter Bajazet and refresh his mind about the power of his military machine, Marlowe's lines ironically evoke some of the most tragic pages in the history of the enemies of Israel. Instead of conjuring up in the minds of the audience images of the beauty and multitude of the stars of heaven and the Biblical promises associated with Israel, Morocus speaks of Nature being arrested in its course for "spring is hindred" by the presence of Bajazet. Instead of suggesting the blessings and benefits of long continuous showers, blessings which would be especially meaningful in the context of the arid regions of Turkey or Bithynia, Morocus speaks of a parched earth, "for neither rain can fall upon the earth", and of smothered vegetation. The earth is literally plunged into darkness; the rays of the sun cannot reach it. Besides evoking a landscape of aridity, drought, and darkness, Morocus ushers in Bajazet's

troops in words which recall the horror of the plagues of Egypt.[67] The Elizabethans, familiar with the Scriptural text and sensitized to its meaning,[68] could not miss the point. Indeed, they probably expected it for references to the Caliph of Turkey as the "Turkish Pharaoh"[69] were not uncommon in contemporary literature. The episode of the plagues of Egypt was always fascinating to any reader of the Bible.[70] Elizabethans were familiar with the incident related in the Book of Exodus which tells how, according to a warning made previously by God to Pharaoh, the locusts came. "They covered all the face of the earth, so that the land was darkened and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees".[71] The ill effects of the plagues of Egypt and those of the presence of Bajazet's troops are made to appear similar. Bajazet's "smoothering host", like the locusts of Egypt stifle all forms of life, plunge the earth into darkness, shut it off from life-giving rains. In words which were meant to praise Bajazet, Morocus has spelt out the foreboding gloom associated with the plagues incurred by Pharaoh and his ministers. A similar fate hangs over Bajazet and his army.

Marlowe further undermines the self-assurance which Bajazet displays with regard to the coming engagement with Tamburlaine. An Elizabethan would easily have caught the self-condemning note in Bajazet's reply to Morocus's flattering words. Bajazet tells him: "All this is true as holy Mahomet. / And all the trees are blasted with our breathes" (1T 3.1.54-55). One may easily suppose the ring of irony and hollowness these words would have had for

---

67. See ibid.

68. England's sense of being entrusted with an Israelite mission in the world probably made the English over-sensitive and responsive to any Biblical allusions to a triumphant people of God striving for the cause of righteousness. See above, pp. 247 ff.; p. 248, n. 28.

69. See above, p. 252 and n. 46; pp. 254-255.

70. See Chew, op. cit., n. 3, pp. 5 ff. and 86.

71. Exod. 10:15.

an Elizabethan. Calling upon "holy Mahomet" to support the strength of any statement was irony itself. As we have seen before, Elizabethans did not believe in the holiness of the diabolical, satanical Mahomet;[72] neither did they believe that calling on Mahomet, the false prophet, a fraud and an impostor[73] by Elizabethan standards, could in any way guarantee the truth of any statement. Furthermore, Bajazet's boasting of blasting trees out of existence with his breath was anything but commendable. It implied the violation of a law imposed by God himself, for he had expressly prescribed the following rule in the laws of warfare which his people of Israel were asked to observe.

> When thou hast besieged a citie a long tyme, and made warre agaynst it to take it, destroy not the trees thereof, ... but eate of them, and cut them not downe, to further thee in thy siege: for the tree of the fielde is man's life.[74]

The setting described in this Biblical verse is one of a long siege accompanied with much destruction and similar to the one Bajazet has laid against Constantinople where his troops are now stationed. Bajazet boasts of his destructive effect on trees seemingly as an asset to his military prowess. Perhaps Marlowe deliberately chose to sum up Bajazet's noxious presence in terms of trees blasted by his monstrous breath. Was Marlowe obliquely suggesting the image of Bajazet to be that of a monster of the kind mentioned in the apocryphal Book of Wisdom, of "furious beasts ... which shulde breathe out blastes of fyre and cast out smoke as a tempest"?[75] Bajazet is possibly

---

72. See above, p. 173 and n. 146; p. 201 and notes 270, 271.

73. See above, p. 171; p. 202 and n. 279.

74. B.V., Deut. 20:19.

75. G.V., Wisdom of Solomon 11:15. "Cruel beastes ... cast out a smokyng breath ...": B.V., Wisdom of Solomon 11:18. Trees were considered to be a precious source of food and protection for both man and beast in the desert lands of the Middle East. The command is repeated in Rev. 9:4.

portrayed as an image or a symbol of the perverse destructive and gigantic monster of Islam before whom nations and even nature would shudder and cringe. Characteristics of this sort were easily associated with the constant Turkish threat. Bajazet's words imply, by the horror they suggest, the well-deserved disasters about to fall on him. Thus the Biblical connotations inferred by these speeches would justify Tamburlaine in some measure for treating Bajazet as he does.

The effect of grouping together these Biblical calamities to introduce Bajazet and his armies places the latter in a most unfavourable light with respect to the audience. These inferences invest the Tamburlaine-Bajazet antagonism with Biblical connotations which present Bajazet and his followers in the odium cast upon Pharaoh and his men as oppressors of the people of God. These allusions, however brief, to an audience conditioned by its set of prejudices with regard to the Turks and, at the same time, alert to any Biblical connotations, could set up a frame of reference against which Bajazet was made to be an enemy of the Christians as were the Egyptians to Israel. As Bajazet's antagonist, Tamburlaine's function might appear analogous to that of Moses who had challenged Pharaoh. Tamburlaine defeats the new Pharaoh as Moses had defeated the Egyptian one by and after the plague episodes. As Moses's task was to save Israel from the contamination of the Egyptian oppression and idolatry, so is Tamburlaine saving the world from the Turkish oppression, tyranny, and idolatry. To suggest that Tamburlaine and his armies might possibly play a role akin to that of Israel in the Old Testament was not necessarily an invention of the dramatist nor a new idea by any means. Timur's historians had referred to their leader in such terms[76] long before the days of Marlowe. Furthermore, as was said before, the role of Israel was easily associated with that of any force engaged in the eradication of social and spiritual evils. This notion possibly was a commonplace

---

76. See above, p. 62 and n. 121; p. 83 and n. 237.

element of the Elizabethan frame of thought. Consequently, the dramatist's Tamburlaine was dealing as justly with this modern enemy of the new Israel as Timur was thought to have done with the enemies of his time and as God had done through the ministry of Moses and Israel at the time of the Pharaoh.

The Biblical connotations which Marlowe associates, or seems to, with the armies of Tamburlaine might support this statement. The dramatist presents the warring bands of Tamburlaine in a perspective quite different from that in which he places Bajazet's troops. Beside the fact that, as challengers of the idolatrous Turkish Pharaoh or Sultan, the mission of Tamburlaine and his bands could somewhat be likened to that of Israel fighting against its idolatrous neighbours, it is interesting to note the light in which Tamburlaine's troops are introduced in the play. Both the ideas of multitude and fewness in number are linked with Tamburlaine and his armies. Twice in his stage career, Tamburlaine is challenged by an enemy which greatly outnumbers him. The first instance occurs when Tamburlaine is warned of the approach of Theridamas and his thousand horsemen. The immediate reaction of Tamburlaine is that this is "an ods too great" (1T 1.2.122) for him and his five hundred men to stand against. However, Tamburlaine resolves the threat of these great odds by resorting to his powers of persuasion (1T 1.2.138 ff.) rather than to his powers of arms. The second time Tamburlaine's armies are estimated as too few to meet the odds happens during an interview with the Turkish envoy. As the Turkish ambassador tells Tamburlaine of Bajazet's plans to attack him shortly, he warns the undaunted Tamburlaine in these words: "Your men are valiant but their number few, / And cannot terrifie his mightie hoste" (1T 3.3.11-12). Nevertheless, the few under the leadership of Tamburlaine, like the few of Israel, do win an overwhelming victory over Bajazet in spite of the latter's superior power. Thus the idea of the victorious few of Tamburlaine over the many of the Turkish Bajazet is present in the play.[77] So is

---

77. That Tamburlaine's armies were inferior in number to those of Bajazet,
(continued overleaf .....)

the idea of Tamburlaine's few straggly nomadic shepherds overpowering the highly experienced armies of the mighty Bajazet. This image could evoke similar situations in which the few of Israel unexpectedly came out as the victors.

Tamburlaine's troops, very early in the play, are also spoken of as multitudes which might suggest Biblical inferences. Mycetes is the first to associate the idea of vast numbers with Tamburlaine's armies. In addition to the grief of having been ousted from his throne by his brother Cosroe, Mycetes has just learned that his best general Theridamas has left him to join the ranks of Tamburlaine. Seething with feelings of revenge for both of these offences, Mycetes would readily "have Cosroe by the head,[78] / And kill proud Tamburlaine with point of sword" (1T 2.2.10-12). Mycetes is determined to defeat "the theevish villaine Tamburlaine" (1T 2.2.3) and his men even if "they be in number infinit" (1T 2.2.43). He is ready to gamble on the lack of martial discipline among Tamburlaine's soldiers, on their greediness for wealth (1T 2.2.45-46, 59-67) and on the hope that "their carelesse swords shall lanch their fellowes throats" (1T 2.2.49), a frequent occurrence among the Biblical enemies of the people of God.[79] However, with the aid of the

---

77. Continued ..... as Marlowe suggests here, is apparently contrary to historical facts: see Harold Lamb, Tamerlane, The Earth Shaker (London, 1929), pp. 246 ff.

78. Cf. "And euerie one caught his fellowe /i.e., his adversary/ by the head and thrust his sworde in his fellowes side": G.V., 2 Sam. 2:16. Was Marlowe influenced by the Biblical text in this instance?

79. Cf. "... the Lord set euerie mans sworde vpon his neighbour, and vpon all the hoste": G.V., Judges 7:22. "... euerie mans sworde was against his fellowe, and there was a very great discomfiture": G.V., 1 Sam. 14:20. "... and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, euerie one helped to destroy another": G.V., 2 Chr. 20:23. "And I wyl set the Egyptians one agaynst another, so that one brother shall fight against another...": B.V., Isa. 19:2; see also Hag. 2:23. "... the enimies were smytten with feare, thorowe the presence of God whiche seeth al thynges. Insomuche that they, fleeyng one here, another there, were rather discomfited of theyr owne people, and wounded with the strokes of theyr owne swordes": B.V., 2 Macc. 12:22. Again the Lord warns that "at that tyme shal friendes fyght one agaynst another lyke enimies": B.V., 4 Esdras 6:24. One must note, however, that Marlowe's line is set within a context of mythology: see John D. Jump, ed., Tamburlaine the Great, Parts I and II (University of Nebraska, 1967), p. 29, n.

troops led by Theridamas and with those of Cosroe, Tamburlaine defeats Mycetes. Later in the play, the Soldan, another of Tamburlaine's major enemies, speaks of the Scythian's armies in a light favourably tinged with a Biblical flavour. He is determined to challenge Tamburlaine and his army,

> Nay could their numbers countervail the stars,
> Or ever drisling drops of Aprill showers,
> Or withered leaves that Autumne shaketh downe.
> (1T 4.1.30-32)

Estimating the size of Tamburlaine's armies in terms of the number of stars could imply a kind of similarity between these armies and the hosts of Israel enjoying God's favours and blessings.[80] The hypothetical multitude of Tamburlaine's armies evoke the promise repeatedly made by God to Israel throughout its history in the persons of Abraham,[81] Isaac,[82] Jacob,[83] and others, that the people of God would become a nation as numerous as the stars. This Biblical inference along with Tamburlaine's vision that "The world will strive with hostes of men at armes / To swarme unto the Ensigne" (1T 2.3.13-14) he supports expands Tamburlaine's moral presence beyond the dimensions of a simple military leader. Because the "Fates and Oracles of heaven have sworne / To roialise the deedes of Tamburlaine" (1T 2.3.7-8), Tamburlaine's person and mission are invested with a divine favour and approval akin to that enjoyed by Israel. The notions of world-wide scope in numbers and areas controlled recall the same aspects related to the panorama of the history of Israel. An allusion of this nature made before an Elizabethan audience familiar with the role of Israel in the Scriptural texts and conscious of its own Israel-

---

80. See above, p. 170 and n. 138.

81. See Gen. 15:5; 22:17; Exod. 32:13. For the realization of this promise, see Deut. 1:10; Neh. 9:23. For the interpretation Mahomet and Islam gave to this promise, see above, p. 147, n. 35; pp. 156-157; p. 157,n.88.

82. See Gen. 26:4; Exod. 32:13. For the realization of this promise, see Deut. 1:10; Neh. 9:23.

83. See Exod. 32:13. For the realization of this promise, see Deut. 1:10; Neh. 9:23.

like[84] mission might have had greater significance than generally supposed. Elizabethans could detect areas of kinship between Tamburlaine's challenge against the idolatrous Turks and their own zealous pursuits in the interests of true religion: both could derive their motives, momentum, and justification from Israel's own sense of mission. Such an association could create some bond of sympathy between Tamburlaine and his audience and make it possible for the Elizabethans to accept and even acclaim Marlowe's hero, however, objectionable he may have been in many respects.

But Marlowe goes further in order that Tamburlaine's troops may be presented in a favourable light. Here, as well as elsewhere, Marlowe resorts to the image of innumerable drops of rain to suggest the extent of Tamburlaine's multitude. Counting Tamburlaine's men as the "ever-drisling drops of Aprill showers" associates Tamburlaine and his troops with one of the beautiful Biblical symbols frequently used to express the lavish kindness of God for his elect. The theme of rains sent by God as an expression of his favours appears frequently in the Bible.[85] Understood against a Biblical background, the line Marlowe has coined is rich with connotations of countless blessings, as innumerable as the drops in a continuous spring shower. Furthermore, Marlowe places this shower in a season of promise and hope, a season ushering in a new year of growth and the vision of a new earth blessed with abundant fruit and harvest. This idea might well recall similar promises made on several

---

84. See above, pp. 247 ff.; p. 248, n. 28; p. 257 and n. 68.

85. The Biblical God uses the powers of nature to bless or to chastise: "He sendeth drought and rain according to his good pleasure": G.V., Gen. 2:5, n. (d). God makes the following promise to Israel: "I will send you rain in due season ...": Lev. 26:4. See also Ezek. 34:26; Deut. 11:14; 28:12. There are numerous passages in Job telling of the blessings of rain sent down by God: see Job 5:8-10;36:27 and G.V., Job 36:27, n. (s); Job 36:28; 37:6 and G.V., Job 37:6, n. (d); Job 38:26; 38:28 and B.V., Job 38:28, n. (n). Allusions to rains as a blessing of God recur again in Ps. 68:9; Isa. 30:23. For rain as a timely blessing, see Jer. 5:24. Gifts of knowledge and understanding are compared to blessings in the form of rain: see Ecclus. 1:23. So is the coming of Christ upon the earth in Christian tradition.

occasions to Abraham and his posterity, that his people would inherit the earth and its fruits. It may be justly inferred that Tamburlaine might eventually enjoy similar privileges. Even if taken at face value, this line creates a link of sympathy between Tamburlaine and his men, and Nature, the mirror or the handmaid of the Lord.[86] One may note that Bajazet also speaks of his troops being as numerous "As hath the Ocean or the Terrene sea / Small drops of water ..." (1T 3.1.10-11).[87] However, Bajazet's comparison does not imply the notions of a new surge of life which continuous April showers might suggest, but simply conveys the idea of the infinite multitude of his troops, a multitude which, as time proves, is doomed to disaster as were the huge armies of Biblical tyrants. Tamburlaine's men are again referred to in terms of drops of rain later in the play but this time the drops are caught up in the turmoil of raging storms. In the second part of the play, after Tamburlaine's generals have reported on the extent of their conquests, Tamburlaine refers to his camp "In number more than are the drops that fall / When Boreas rents a thousand swelling cloudes" (2T 1.3.159-160).[88] The increase in the number of men has come as a result of the storms of warfare. A cold and strong north wind and the violent upheaval of numerous stormy clouds are possibly apt elements to include in a comment which wishes to express how the wars of his generals have swelled his warring ranks. Tamburlaine's troops have grown in number in the measure that he has pursued his warfare as the Scourge and Wrath of God. In the passage quoted above, the idea of the multitude of Tamburlaine's men is alluded to for a third time when Marlowe compares

---

86. Henry King, in A Sermon of Deliverance (London, 1626), speaks of the whole world as "a Book penn'd and composed by God": see p. 4. One of the Renaissance concepts on this subject was that the theatre of the world was full of the wonders of God: see Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 34. See also DF, line 756.

87. See also Ecclus. 1:2.

88. See ibid.

them to "the withered leaves" (1T 4.1.32)[89] of autumn. Although the ideas of "fall" and "withered leaves" could suggest ruin and decay, nevertheless, because this allusion comes fast upon that made to spring, the fall of autumn leaves may be viewed as a prelude to a new season. Thus, Marlowe resorts to images either borrowed from the Bible or strongly suggestive of the Biblical texts to describe Tamburlaine's forces in a favourable light. These images may imply a new era as well as associate Tamburlaine and his troops with the Biblical people upon whom God showered his blessings. Marlowe's manner of introducing Tamburlaine's men is obviously the opposite to the one used to present Bajazet's armies. What message was Marlowe trying to convey to his audience by differentiating the armies of these two leaders in this manner?

Mention must be made of the fear-inspiring powers attributed to Tamburlaine as they were to the troops of Israel. In spite of Israel's small numbers, victory was often theirs because of some inexplicable terror which seemed to seize the enemy. Those God-sent fears traumatized the enemy and made them powerless to defend themselves.[90] Besides being the "terror of the world",[91] as Tamburlaine loves to describe himself, Tamburlaine seems to possess powers to subdue the enemy in a similar way. While Bajazet may boast of being a terror to the world,[92] his boasts remain unconvincing when seen against the impending defeat which awaits him. Many times throughout the play Tamburlaine and his armies are alluded to as most fear-inspiring. The Damascenes besieged by Tamburlaine are "halfe dead for feare" (1T 4.4.4)[93] even before their

---

89. This comparison occurs in historical accounts of Tamburlaine's warfare: see above, p. 70 and n. 162; p. 71, n. 164.

90. See above, p. 255 and n. 65.

91. The expression "terror of the world" as a description of Tamburlaine appears four times in the play: 1T 1.2.38; 3.3.45; 2T 4.1.154; 5.3.45. References to Tamburlaine as a terror occur at least seven other times: see 1T 4.1.14; 4.2.32; 5.1.72, 176; 2T 2.1.15; 4.1.200.

92. Bajazet calls himself a "dread Lord of Affrike, Europe and Asia": 1T 3.1.23. See also 1T 3.1.48, 49 for other references to the fear he inspires.

93. See also 2T 5.3.115.

assailant has struck them. Frederick refers to Tamburlaine "that strikes a terrour to all Turkish hearts" (2T 2.1.15). Perhaps it was this underlying assumption borrowed from similar traits attributed to Israel that made generations between the Timur of history and the chroniclers known at the time of Elizabeth associate a terrorizing fear with the name of Tamburlaine. That assumption had led chroniclers to define Tamburlaine as "the scourge and terror of the world", a definition which Marlowe chose to preserve in his play.

Thus, Marlowe's stage hero does suggest affinities with Israel, affinities which are enhanced by the stronger similarities which seem to exist between Bajazet and the Pharaoh. Tamburlaine's role and mission, by contrast, recall those of Israel. Viewed in this manner, Tamburlaine's role was thus not so far removed from the one the Elizabethans assumed in face of the ills of their world. As a result, in addition to sharing Tamburlaine's aspirations to greatness and magnificence, the Elizabethans could experience on religious grounds as well, a certain degree of kinship with Marlowe's hero and praise to some extent his sense of purpose. At the same time, they could project on him some of their own righteous feelings about their own mission. In this way, Tamburlaine, in spite of his war and carnage, could become quite compatible with the Elizabethan frame of mind, even to the point of being worthy of acclaim and promotion to the galaxy of their greatly admired heroes. By contrast, Bajazet merited the opposite: infamy, disgrace, and even harsh treatment.

Marlowe does not stop there, by any means, in his efforts to portray Bajazet as a condemnable character. The dramatist resorts to various devices which place the Turk in a perspective of idolatry totally unacceptable by Elizabethan standards. Bajazet's prestige as a military and a political leader is subtly but inexorably undermined on religious grounds especially. While playing on the emotional responses of the Elizabethans to anything connected with the Turks, Marlowe takes care to destroy any element which might redeem Bajazet and gradually builds up instead an audience conscious-

ness of the evil in Bajazet which justly calls for the rigours of Tamburlaine.

First, Bajazet is presented as a Moslem of the most orthodox of the orthodox known to exist in Marlowe's times. As has been mentioned before,[94] to be a kinsman of Mahomet (1T 3.3.76), as Bajazet claims to be, is to insert one's self in the line of the closest followers of Mahomet's dictates. To be a member of Mahomet's tribe, the most revered tribe in Islam, is to be recognized as the truest of the true Moslems. Such is Bajazet's status as a Moslem. Bajazet's religious status is further implied by his position as Caliph, the head of the Turkish state. The Moslem theory of leadership based on the principle of one God, therefore, one emperor[95] as the image of God on earth,[96] raised the Caliphate to a sacred and divine rank, that of "Gods great lieftenant over all the world" (2T 3.5.2), as Bajazet's son Callapine is acclaimed in the second part of the play. Thus, at the time of Marlowe, the Caliph of Turkey, usually a kinsman of Mahomet, was the closest substitute to Mahomet on earth and, at the same time, the most complete representative of God.

Perhaps Marlowe was inferring Bajazet's divine prerogatives as Caliph of Turkey when he makes him ask Tamburlaine's men who are binding him: "Ah, villaines, dare ye touch my sacred armes?" (1T 3.3.268). This is a direct allusion to his physical self as a sacred person, a kind of allusion which Tamburlaine never makes about himself. Moreover, Bajazet's reference to his "sacred armes" is possibly reminiscent of God's "holy arms"[97] suggesting

---

94. See above, p. 66, n. 138; p. 214 and n. 352; p. 227.

95. See Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 202. See also above, p. 66, n. 141; p.149, n.

96. According to the Moslem sect of the Umayyads, the Caliph was "the deputy of God": see W. Montgomery Watt, The Majesty That Was Islam: The Islamic World, 661-1100 (London, 1976 reprinted ed.), p. 54. Abu-Bakr rejected this meaning of Caliph and replaced it by "deputy of the messenger of God": see ibid. See also Pierre Vattier, L'Histoire Mahométane ... (Paris, 1657), p. 24.

97. The Bible has this verse about the holy arm of God: "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm ...": Isa. 52:10. The "bare arm" is described "as ready to smite his enemies and to deliuer his people": G.V., Isa. 52:10, n. (i). The idea of battle is implied in the passage. Binding Bajazet's "holy arm" symbolically amounts to removing completely his possibilities of waging war again.

ness of the evil in Bajazet which justly calls for the rigours of Tamburlaine.

First, Bajazet is presented as a Moslem of the most orthodox of the orthodox known to exist in Marlowe's times. As has been mentioned before,[94] to be a kinsman of Mahomet (1T 3.3.76), as Bajazet claims to be, is to insert one's self in the line of the closest followers of Mahomet's dictates. To be a member of Mahomet's tribe, the most revered tribe in Islam, is to be recognized as the truest of the true Moslems. Such is Bajazet's status as a Moslem. Bajazet's religious status is further implied by his position as Caliph, the head of the Turkish state. The Moslem theory of leadership based on the principle of one God, therefore, one emperor[95] as the image of God on earth,[96] raised the Caliphate to a sacred and divine rank, that of "Gods great lieftenant over all the world" (2T 3.5.2), as Bajazet's son Callapine is acclaimed in the second part of the play. Thus, at the time of Marlowe, the Caliph of Turkey, usually a kinsman of Mahomet, was the closest substitute to Mahomet on earth and, at the same time, the most complete representative of God.

Perhaps Marlowe was inferring Bajazet's divine prerogatives as Caliph of Turkey when he makes him ask Tamburlaine's men who are binding him: "Ah, villaines, dare ye touch my sacred armes?" (1T 3.3.268). This is a direct allusion to his physical self as a sacred person, a kind of allusion which Tamburlaine never makes about himself. Moreover, Bajazet's reference to his "sacred armes" is possibly reminiscent of God's "holy arms"[97] suggesting

---

94. See above, p. 66, n. 138; p. 214 and n. 352; p. 227.

95. See Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 202. See also above, p. 66, n. 141; p.149, n.

96. According to the Moslem sect of the Umayyads, the Caliph was "the deputy of God": see W. Montgomery Watt, The Majesty That Was Islam: The Islamic World, 661-1100 (London, 1976 reprinted ed.), p. 54. Abu-Bakr rejected this meaning of Caliph and replaced it by "deputy of the messenger of God": see ibid. See also Pierre Vattier, L'Histoire Mahométane ... (Paris, 1657), p. 24.

97. The Bible has this verse about the holy arm of God: "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm ...": Isa. 52:10. The "bare arm" is described "as ready to smite his enemies and to deliuer his people": G.V., Isa. 52:10, n. (i). The idea of battle is implied in the passage. Binding Bajazet's "holy arm" symbolically amounts to removing completely his possibilities of waging war again.

their common purpose of waging holy wars. Bajazet's words are immediately followed by his lament over the inertness of Mahomet in the trying circumstances of which he is a victim. The immediacy of Bajazet's allusion to himself as a sacred person and that of Mahomet's neglect of him might imply the intimate relationship of reverence and support which should exist between Bajazet and Mahomet and, by extension, between Bajazet and God. Thus, by kinship and position, Bajazet has a double claim to sacred and divine prerogatives. Be that as it may, if one wished to deal a deadly blow to Islam, short of striking at Mahomet himself, its founder, the Caliph of Turkey was the one who should be destroyed.

But how does Marlowe justify Tamburlaine, a Moslem himself, in striking doen Bajazet, another Moslem? It must be remembered, as was argued before,[98] that Marlowe refrains from involving Tamburlaine in any cults of devotion to Mahomet. Marlowe keeps Tamburlaine free from such intimations. Indeed, contrary to the facts reported in some legendary[99] and in most historical accounts [100] of Tamburlaine's career, Mohammedanism occupies very little place in Tamburlaine's consciousness. Moreover, as it was pointed out before,[101] the little attention that Tamburlaine does grant Mahomet is, from the very first, neither flattering nor reverent; it leads quite normally to the climax of the hero's radical hostility displayed towards Mahomet in the second part of Tamburlaine. Thus, one might observe that, although Marlowe seems to model his hero on the contemporary image of Mahomet, the pattern of Tamburlaine's relationship with the Prophet in the play is one mainly of an antagonism which gradually increases until the moment of Tamburlaine's total rejection of Mahomet.

---

98. See above, pp. 120 and 224 ff.

99. See above, p. 120; p. 125, n. 443.

100. See above, p. 64 and n. 130; pp. 65-66; p. 65, n. 137.

101. See above, pp. 224 ff.

The pattern of Tamburlaine's antagonism towards Bajazet, Mahomet's representative on earth, is similar. Very early in the play, Tamburlaine affirms, theoretically at least for the time being, his superiority over "the mightie Turke" (1T 1.2.14) by refusing to recognize the validity of Zenocrate's letters of conduct, letters which had been previously accepted by Bajazet himself (1T 1.2.11-16). A slight note of scorn may possibly be already detected here foreboding a struggle which will end only with the death of the great Turk, God's and Mahomet's lieutenant on earth. In fact, very soon in the play, Tamburlaine perceives the task of striking down Bajazet to be his first major assignment since he has acceded to the throne of Persia. Tamburlaine proclaims himself as the Scourge of God who "Wil first subdue the Turke ..." (1T 3.3.46). Apart from suggesting that Tamburlaine's purpose in waging war is to liberate the Christians, Marlowe makes the audience realize why Tamburlaine should concentrate his efforts on the destruction of the Turk. Marlowe involves Bajazet in forms of religious practice and worship, some of which are entirely in keeping with a Moslem context but are strongly depreciative of Bajazet by the Biblical connotations which they evoke.

As was mentioned before, Bajazet, being a true Moslem, has paid his respects to Mahomet's shrine. In a prayer addressed to the Prophet asking him to intervene on behalf of her husband's military engagement, Zabina strengthens her plea by reminding Mahomet that Bajazet has offered jewels to his sacred shrine (1T 3.3.199). An offering of this sort recalls similar idolatrous practices described in the Bible.[102] The recipient of such

---

102. Offering jewels to a shrine possibly suggested practices of idolatry to an Elizabethan. There is at least one instance of such an idolatrous practice in the Bible. The God Mauzzim, who is defined as "the God of power and richesse" (See B.V., Dan. 11:38, n. (y).) and called a "god of fortresses" in modern versions (See C.I. Scofield, ed., Holy Bible: Authorized King James Version (New York, 1967), p. 917.) is honoured "with golde and syluer, with precious stones, and pleasant thynges": B.V., Dan. 11:38.

offerings is supposedly divine. Thus, in an indirect way, this gesture on the part of Bajazet projects before the mind of the audience an image of Mahomet the god. However, one wonders if this allusion is not meant to conjure up reminiscences about the quarrels which had previously shaken the clerical world of England in connection with the treasures hoarded up in the countless shrines until then revered and venerated for centuries by the English.[103] The shrine of Thomas à Becket of Canterbury,[104] certainly known to Marlowe, had enjoyed an almost unrivalled prestige in this respect. Tudor leaders had associated notions of idolatry with this custom of venerating the dead and strong measures had been taken principally by Henry VIII and his councillor Thomas Cromwell[105] to curtail such practices. In the popular mind, veneration of the shrine of Becket or of any other like shrine possibly did not greatly differ in nature from the one Bajazet supposedly had had for the Prophet: the modes of its expression were strikingly similar. It is possible that the manner of introducing Bajazet's devotion to the memory of Mahomet, of his having made at least one pilgrimage climaxed by rich offerings to the holy places of Islam, bristled with connotations which renewed in the Elizabethan spectator the proper attitudes he should have and preserve before these supposed excesses or ills worthy of being blotted out. In this context,

---

103. For laws abolishing pilgrimages and the veneration of relics, see above, pp. 246-247.

104. The shrine of Thomas à Becket had had a long glorious history. Pilgrims to Canterbury, made famous by Chaucer's Canterbury Tales existing in many editions by Marlowe's time, are estimated to have poured into the coffers of the cathedral as much as a yearly £20,000 from the time of Henry II's penitent visit in 1174 until the day when the veneration of Becket's shrine was discontinued by an order of Lord Cromwell in 1538. This shrine, which had been the goal of every pilgrim, was renowned for its fabulous number of jewels and the glitter of its gold, "gold being the meanest thing to be seen there". The spoils from the shrine alone, in gold and jewels, are said to have filled two great chests which eight strong men could hardly carry out of the cathedral. See A.D. Wraight and Virginia Stern, In Search of Christopher Marlowe: A Pictorial Biography (London, 1965), pp. 7, 36 and 38. The legend of richly ornamented shrines of the idol Mahomet was also part of the medieval and Renaissance literature: see Chew, op. cit., n. 3, pp. 390 ff.

105. See above, p. 247, n. 21.

Bajazet's veneration for Mahomet lost all its dignity, became an evil similar to those the Reformation movement had tried to eradicate, and was most worthy of censure.

However, should the above remarks not be convincing, there were other devotional practices encouraged by Bajazet which could not so lightly be passed by. During his captivity and about to be used as a footstool, Bajazet makes the following plea:

> Ye holy Priests of heavenly Mahomet,
> That sacrificing slice and cut your flesh,
> Staining your Altars with your purple blood:
> Make heaven to frowne ...
> (1T 4.2.2-5)

Bajazet goes on pleading that Tamburlaine be destroyed. One's first impression upon reading these lines is that Bajazet's notions about religion are strangely primitive and certainly alien to the social and religious contexts of Marlowe's audiences. They recall, nevertheless, the mysterious pagan cults of remote antiquity when the favours of the gods were won or their wrath was averted by the sacrificial offering of life in whatever form nature could provide: plants, animals, and even man. Indeed, perhaps Marlowe's imagination was fired by stories about the pagan practices of the Aztec or Inca Indians which explorers were bringing back to the shores of England at this time. But to an Elizabethan, who had repeatedly heard certain sections of the Bible, these lines disclosed traits about Bajazet which were most condemnable. Bajazet's pleas could be given force in the course of a stage production and irrevocably set him among the idolatrous who deserved to be exterminated at all cost. Indeed, these lines, remarkable for their conciseness, suggest all the components of an organized idolatrous cult. Marlowe summarizes Islam in terms of a heavenly being or god honoured by a form of clergy offering sacrifices on altars, facts which supposes specific places of worship. This thumb-nail description, most of which is inexact by Moslem standards, is most damaging to Bajazet's prestige. Priests, altars, sacrifices, of human blood at that, all to the honour of some deity, constituted the framework of an idolatrous cult to be condemned from

the start. Each constituent part of this cult is worth a moment of examination, the traditional image of Mahomet the idol being the first to be noted.

By the time Marlowe wrote his play, the idol Mahomet and his priests, altars, and rites were already part of a long literary tradition which went back to the medieval mystery plays. Part of this tradition was the medieval play Mary Magdalene, one of the Digby Mysteries,[106] in which a King and a Queen of Marseilles go to a temple on the altar of which sits the idol Mahond, another name for Mahomet. They attend a service conducted by a pagan priest and his acolyte. Liturgical rites, offerings, and relics of the god are mentioned.[107] Indeed, some aspects of this scene seem to be inspired by Biblical incidents involving wizardry and idolatry.[108] This scene centred on the idol Mahond was part of a much wider body of literature in which religious figures of eastern cults, like Mahond, were associated or even equated with devils of the kind Milton was to immortalize in his poetry. Marlowe and his contemporaries were probably familiar with this traditional literature; he could have borrowed from such works to create his image of Mahomet, the idol of his play. But he could have drawn some of this material from Islam as well.

Strictly speaking, there were no priests of the kind evoked by Bajazet's lines in the faith of Islam.[109] Mahomet was considered the real High-

---

106. See Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 391 and n. 2.

107. See ibid., p. 391.

108. Chew notes that this situation especially resembles the story of Elijah and the priests of Baal: see op. cit., n. 3, p. 391, n. 4.

109. D.S. Margoliouth, in Mohammed (London, 1939), says that there was never any priesthood in the strict sense of the word in Islam but only leaders in prayer and preachers: see p. 64. The fact that no difference was made between Moslem priests and laity gained some sympathy from the Protestants: see Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 200, n. 1. Philippus Lonicerus outlines the eight types of such leaders and their respective duties: administration, preaching, public reading, directing ceremonies in the temple, singing hymns, etc.: see Chronicorvm Tvrcicorvm, In quibus Tvrcorvm Origo, Principes, Imperatores, ... (Francoforti ad Moenvm, 1578), Tomvs I, fol. 56 ff.

Priest,[110] the intermediary agent between Islam and God and, consequently, there was no need for that function to be fulfilled in truth or symbolically by anyone else in the Islamic world. Thus the term "priest" could not be used in its strict and precise sense.[111] But when reading the contemporary literature on Islam, one discovers that the word was often used in a loose and all-inclusive sense, especially in the current legends about Mahomet. Thus, in this word "priest" was included a group of individuals dedicated exclusively to a religious life of prayer and fast within the context of Islam. Philippus Lonicerus,[112] whose treatise Marlowe certainly knew,[113] mentions such religious figures[114] as part of Islam as he describes this faith. Nicholas Nicholay,[115] with whose writings Marlowe is thought to have been familiar, describes five different kinds of religious characters or wandering monks, some of them being worldly, of a rather dubious and questionable behaviour, and travelling

---

110. This stems from the Logos doctrine used to explain the posthumous Mohammed. The Logos, made in the image of God, is described as an archetypal idea, a seal on things, an archangel as the instrument of creation, as God's interpreter and prophet, as a mediator or High-Priest between man and God: see Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, Studies in Islamic Mysticism (Cambridge, 1921), p. 138, n. 2. Mohammed as the Logos unites all these attributes in his single nature: see ibid., p. 157.

111. Knolles uses the word "priest" several times in connection with Islam. He speaks of Mahometans priest going about with the army saluting "the new Moone with great superstition": see op. cit., n.42, p. 421. Priests play a part in the legends about the idol Mahomet: see Chew, op. cit., n.3, pp. 391 and 392.

112. See Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 109, fol. 59 - 59v.

113. See below, p. 297, n. 187; p. 313, n. 239.

114. See Alfred Guillaume, Islam (Penguin Books, 1977 reprinted ed.), pp. 150 ff.: also Duncan Black Macdonald, Development of Muslim Theology Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory (London, 1903), pp. 130-131.

115. Nicholas Nicholay, The Navigations, peregrinations and voyages made into Turkie... Translated out of the French by T. Washington the younger (London, 1585), fol. 99 - 107v.

much under the pretext of making pilgrimages.[116] One particular kind of Mohammedan mendicant friars or monks wandering around in skins were called dervishes. By eating a special kind of herb, these dervishes would bring on fits of madness during which, with the use of a certain kind of knife or razor, they would slash their neck, stomach, or thighs until they should be covered with most horrible wounds. In this practice, they considered themselves to be true imitators of Mahomet who, as the story goes, had become mad while hiding in a cave during his great periods of abstinence.[117] In Nicholay's book, there is a full-page sketch of such a dervish slashing his left arm with a long knife. Deep cuts are visible on both arms, thighs, and legs.[118] It is significant that out of the various kinds of religious figures, each having distinctive characteristics, Marlowe should have chosen to incorporate allusions to these mendicants. It is also significant that of all the religious customs advocated by Islam, for instance, the five daily prayers, the Fast of Ramadan, the alms giving, and others, Marlowe should have chosen to allude to the gruesome slashings practised by these dervishes.

The fact that such primitive practices were the concern of Biblical authors is even more significant. On several occasions, the people of Israel are warned against the evil usage of cutting one's flesh to honour the dead, another expression for an idol as opposed to the living God. The Lord tells his people:"Ye shal not cut your flesh for the dead ...",[119] or again, "Let them not ... make any cuttynges in their fleashe".[120] Moreover, Baal's priests of the Bible were notoriously known for their habit of lancing their flesh.[121]

---

116. See Nicholay, op. cit., n. 115, fol. 99 ff.

117. See ibid., fol. 102 - 102v.

118. See ibid., fol. 103.

119. G.V., Lev. 19:28. See also Deut. 14:1.

120. B.V., Lev. 21:5.

121. The priests of Baal, perhaps thought of as the most idolatrous characters in the Bible, appealed to their god Baal in this way: "And they cried

(continued overleaf .....

If the frequency with which Baal's priests appear in the homiletic literature of Marlowe's day[122] betrays the interests of the Elizabethans, then one is forced to conclude that Marlowe's contemporaries had more than a passing acquaintance or interest in the Biblical episode of Baal's priests and in the evils of idolatry contained therein. To the Elizabethans, Mahomet was of the dead or idols honoured by priests and his priests recalled Baal's and their idolatrous practices. Because Marlowe involved Bajazet with such a cult, the Turk confirmed the idolatrous trait which was generally associated with his fellow-countrymen. Bajazet's Moslem practices were thus condemned by the Biblical stand against idolatry which they evoked.

In the same way that there were no priests, in the strict sense of the word, in Islam, neither was there the practice of sacrificial worship of a devotional or propitiatory value[123] as there was in the Old Testament.[124] At most, there were commemorative sacrifices of animals offered in honour

---

121. Continued ..... aloud, and cut themselves as their manner was with knives and lancers, til the blood flowed on them": 1 Kgs. 18:28. See also Jer. 41:5 and 47:5 for other allusions to this practice.

122. Allusions to Baal and his priests in the pulpit literature of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries are numerous. See George Abbot, op. cit., n. 20, pp.17 and 490. Abbot speaks of "Baals Priests, who could cut and launce themselues": see ibid., pp. 437 and 490. See also Woodcoke, op. cit., n. 17, p. 100. Adams calls image worshippers the "secret friends to Baal": see op. cit., n. 30, p. 12. See also Richard Gardiner, A Sermon preached at St. Maries in Oxford ... (Oxford, 1622), p. 26. Many were the allusions to Baal and his priests which could be found.

123. Sacrifices in Islam were not propitiatory but commemorative of Abraham's sacrifice: see Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 448. n. 3.

124. The theme of sacrifices occupies a large place in Holy Scripture. The various types of sacrifices, for instance, the holocausts in which the victim was completely consummated, the peace offerings which were partly destroyed and partly used by the offerers or priests, the sin offerings centred on the idea of expiation, and the guilt offerings very similar to the previous ones in purpose: all of these with the laws governing the rituals accompanying each type of sacrifice, the nature of the victim, the priest officiating, the place, the time and the purpose of each type, etc., constituted an important aspect of the Jewish law of worship: see Raymond E. Brown, S.S., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., and Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm., eds., The Jerome Biblical Commentary (London, 1968), vol. 2, p. 876, index and corresponding articles.

of Abraham.[125] Moslems sometimes sacrificed rams in memory of the one God had supplied as a substitute for Isaac whom Abraham had been about to slay at the request of God himself. These sacrifices were occasions for communal gatherings to which the poor and the needy were invited to share the victim,[126] but they fulfilled no function of formal worship. Furthermore, as far as is known, Islam did not resort to the practice of human sacrifices.[127] One may supposedly conclude that Islam did not use altars either. Islamic mosques were primarily places of prayer and public worship, not the scene of any elaborate ritual. The idea of priests of Mahomet staining the altar with their own blood is of Marlowe's invention. By it, the dramatist probably wished to recall the numerous times altars were mentioned in the Bible, either erected in honour of the one Biblical God[128] or destroyed for having been used in idolatrous ceremonies.[129] It recalled also the numerous occasions in which priests had offered sacrifices to their idols and the drastic retributions

---

125. Lonicerus says this on the subject:

> Immolatur vel iuuencus, vel eximiae formae equus, inter pauperes victima distribuitur, nec sibi quicquam reseruat de victima, qui eam immolat, ... E plebe qui sunt, plaerique egregium immolant arietem, qui ore pedibusque sit nigricantibus, vellere candido, cornibus eximiis. Hac forma arietem magni aestimant, singulique patres familias offerre talem gaudent. Ingens immolantium zelus est, ingens festiuitas ...:

op. cit., n. 109, fol. 49v.

126. According to Guillaume, the Moslem custom and manner of making sacrifices as communal feasts had been inherited from Arabian paganism prior to the founding of Islam: see op. cit., n. 114, p. 6.

127. Guillaume believes that although the Koran mentions no human sacrifices, if Herodotus's account is authentic and if one takes into account the early Arab background of Islam, then it is clear that there were human sacrifices: see ibid., pp. 8-9.

128. See Gen. 8:20; 12:7,8; 13:18; 22:9; 26:25; 35:1, 7; Exod. 17:15; 30:1; 32:5; 38:30; Deut. 27:5, 6; Josh. 8:30; 22:10; Judges 6:24, 26; 1 Sam. 7:17; 2 Sam. 24:18, 21, 25; 2 Kgs. 21:4; 1 Chr. 21:26; 2 Chr. 33:4, 16; Ezra 3:2; etc.

129. See Exod. 34:13; Deut. 7:5; 12:3; Judges 2:2; 1 Kgs. 16:32; 2 Kgs. 21:3; 2 Chr. 33:3; 1 Macc. 1:49; etc.

God had inflicted upon these worshippers of false gods,[130] the priests of Baal being such an instance.[131] Thus, by the practice mentioned in Marlowe's lines, Bajazet and his priests are all guilty of idolatry. Marlowe's clever invention definitely and without doubt condemns Bajazet as an idolater while it consecrates Mahomet as an idol or a false god.

Marlowe picks up the idea of sacrifices again in the second part of Tamburlaine. In his encounter with Tamburlaine's armies, Callapine plans to "sacrifice / Mountaines of breathlesse men to Mahomet" (2T 3.5.54-55). Marlowe could have drawn the idea for this idolatrous practice from Knolles's Historie. On several occasions, this author mentions sacrifices being offered in honour of Mahomet to celebrate victories.[132] Although Callapine's remark could be understood simply as a way of expressing the carnage he plans to effect in Tamburlaine's military ranks, yet, in view of the previous allusions to the sacrifices of the priests of Mahomet, this remark cannot be passed so lightly. Marlowe's lines were probably meant to be as damaging as possible to the religious image of Callapine. His plans to sacrifice heaps of men to Mahomet combine the notions of human sacrifices and idolatry.[133] Callapine thus acquires the stigma of idolatry which his father bore. It must be noted, however, that, for some reason, this idolatry on the part of Callapine remains unpunished. Perhaps, in this instance, Marlowe felt he must be true to history.

---

130. On the slaughter of the Amalekites, see Exod. 17:14; 23:23, 27. On the defeat of the Egyptians, see Exod. 14. On the fate of idolaters, see Num. 32:13; 33:4; Deut. 3:3, 6; 7:4; 29:23; 31:4; Josh. 10:11; 2 Chr. 31:1; 32:12; 34:4; etc.

131. See Judges 6:25, 28, 30, 32; 1 Kgs. 18:40; 2 Kgs. 10:18; 11:18; 23:4; 2 Chr. 34:4.

132. See Knolles, op. cit., n. 42, pp. 712-713, 738, etc.

133. The idea of human beings being sacrificed to idols is present in the following: "For beholde, the heate of a great multitude is kindled against you, and they ... shal slaye you for meat to the idoles": G.V., 2 Esdras, 16:60. See also B.V., 2 Esdras 16:69. Punishment of idolaters in the Bible takes frightful proportions: "For when the dead were fallen downe by heapes one vpon another, he stoode in the middest, pacified the wrath, ...": B.V., Wisdom of Solomon, 18:23.

The death of Bajazet did not bring an end to the cult and veneration of Mahomet nor the downfall of the Caliphs of Turkey. Bajazet's sons were to revive the great Turkish empire in their own time.[134] Nevertheless, this allusion helps to preserve the image of the Turks as that of a condemnable idolatrous nation.

Finally, Marlowe introduces another passage replete with idolatrous inferences. These, while not being self-condemning on Bajazet's lips, could, however, feed the emotions of the Elizabethans and stimulate reactions towards idolatrous practices which would indirectly reaffirm in their own eyes Tamburlaine's justification for scourging the Turk. After his defeat at the hands of Tamburlaine, Bajazet says the following:

> Now will the Christian miscreants be glad,
> Ringing with joy their superstitious belles:
> And making bonfires for my overthrow.
> But ere I die those foule Idolaters
> Shall make me bonfires with their filthy bones.
> (1T 3.3.236-240)

The Christian practice of ringing church bells and making bonfires to celebrate the defeat of the Turks was a historical fact which Marlowe could have read about in the sources of Tamburlaine's story. Knolles tells of the Greeks of Constantinople celebrating with bonfires the news that Tamburlaine had refused to take possession of the city after defeating Bajazet.[135] That Bajazet should express his indignation over the Christians' manner of celebrating their triumphs was entirely in keeping with the situation.[136] In fact, momentous events were quite often celebrated in this manner. The citizens of London had rung church bells, lighted bonfires, and banqueted in the streets of London to celebrate the capture of Anthony Babington and

---

134. See above, pp. 79 and 80.

135. See Knolles, op. cit., n. 42, p. 222.

136. Thomas understands the English custom of celebrating May Day and other feasts with bonfires as a legacy of the remote pagan days: see op. cit., n. 18, pp. 48 and 72.

his fellow-conspirators in 1586.[137] After Tamburlaine was written, the English were to rejoice over the defeat of the Spanish Armada by lighting bonfires in lands as distant as Barbary.[138] Marlowe's description of celebrations was in keeping with the customs and ways of the Englishmen. Moreover, the Turk's hatred for church bells was a well known fact in Renaissance England. The total absence of bells even in Christian churches had impressed more than one visitor of the lands of Islam.[139] So did some Elizabethans condemn the use of bells as a superstitious custom.[140] To certain Englishmen, this fact could become the basis of a bond of sympathy with the Turks. However, the sympathy Bajazet might have earned for himself by his attitude to some Christian customs was probably speedily cancelled by the fact that he recalled the manner in which the exuberant joy of having defeated the Turks on various occasions in the past had been expressed. Ringing of bells, lighting of bonfires, these were associated with jubilant moments of triumph over the Turks for the Christians of Europe, possibly for those of England as well.

But what about the burning of the bones of idolatrous Christians? Knolles also tells of Tamburlaine ordering the bones of a false prophet of Damascus to be dug up and burnt after the fall of the city.[141] The idea of of linking the name of Tamburlaine with such a deed could also have been inspired by similar incidents in Holy Scripture. In several instances in the

---

137. See Mark Eccles, Christopher Marlowe in London (Cambridge, Mass., 1934), p. 154.

138. Englishmen in Turkey at the time of the defeat of the Spanish Armada were allowed to express their joy by means of bonfires: see Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 341.

139. See Chew, op. cit., n. 3, pp. 195-196. Apparently, the heathen rite of the Turks could not endure bells: see ibid., p. 196. See also ibid., pp. 197 and 200. The victory of Lepanto in 1571 had been celebrated in Venice by the joyful ringing of bells: see ibid., p. 125.

140. On the idolatrous connotations associated with bells, see Sparke, op. cit., n. 19, p. 40. See also above, p. 42 and n. 39.

141. See Knolles, op. cit., n. 42, p. 227.

Old Testament, the burning of the bones of idolatrous priests is mentioned.[142] Even though these incidents belonged to a rather stronger religious context and implied far more important and weightier consequences than those in the play, was Marlowe counting on these Biblical inferences to intensify the odium of idolatry with respect to Bajazet? For Bajazet's lines could surely recall in particular the reforms of Josiah of which one had been to break down high places and their idols and to burn upon the altars the bones of idolatrous priests who had paid homage to these idols. Bajazet speaks of the "filthy bones" of "foul idolaters"; the Old Testament speaks of burning bones on the altar "to pollute it".[143] "Filthy", "foul" and "pollute" suggest the moral decay brought about by idolatry. To a Christian, the implied parallel between Bajazet and Josiah was ironic and it was possibly meant to dispel the sympathy of the Elizabethans for Tamburlaine's victim. By these words, Bajazet made himself odious to his audience and worthy of his ill-omened fate.

Thus, we have the image of the Turk, the leader of them all, almost a victim at the mercy of Marlowe's pen. The dramatist seizes every opportunity of placing his victim Bajazet in a position detrimental to his good name, if he had one, in the consciousness of the Christian world and in that of the audience especially. Marlowe chooses to include details which recall Biblical events as striking examples of God's rigorous ways of dealing with idolaters.

---

142. It could also have been part of the process of associating Tamburlaine with Biblical heroes. Josiah is the Biblical prophet who burns the bones of idolatrous priests at the service of the false gods of Jeroboam. His coming is prophesied: see 1 Kgs. 13:2. When he comes, he carries out his reforms (see 2 Kgs. 23:14) dragging out bones from sepulchres and burning them (see 2 Kgs. 23:16), as did Tamburlaine according to Knolles, or burning those of the priests of the high places who had been slain (see 2 Kgs. 23:20). The cruelty of this punishment meted out to idolaters is brought out later in a note about Moab who is blamed for having burnt the bones of the king of Edom. "For the Moabites were so cruel against the King of Edom that they burnt his bones after that he was dead: which declared their barbarous rage, seing they wolde reuenge them selues of the dead": G.V., Amos 2:1, n. (a).

143. The verse is as follows: "And as Iosiah turned him selfe, he spied the graues, that were in the mount, and sent and toke the bones out of the graues, and burnt them vpon the altar, and polluted it, according to the worde of the Lord ...": 2 Kgs. 23:16.

Bajazet cannot expect a kinder treatment. Bajazet's devotion to Mahomet, his manner of expressing this devotion, his denunciations of Christians in general: all these help to present Bajazet in a condemning light and make his ill-fated destiny inevitable if justice is to prevail.

So far, the antagonism between Tamburlaine and Bajazet and the motives which may have directed the sympathies of the audience as Marlowe wished them to be, have been derived mainly from textual elements themselves. Marlowe's manner of presenting Tamburlaine and his men, and Bajazet and his armies have placed each in an acceptable or unacceptable position, as the case may be, with respect to the audience. However, Marlowe may have resorted to more subtle means of balancing the sympathies of the audience between the Moslem Tamburlaine and the Moslem Bajazet. The fact that Marlowe does not use the words "Moslem" or "Islam" or their derivstives once in the play forces the reader to conclude that the dramatist did not set the antagonism between Tamburlaine and Bajazet on Islamic grounds, at least not obviously. References to Islam would have made the task of incriminating Bajazet while glorifying Tamburlaine so much the more difficult. However, in the frame of mind of most Christians at the time of Marlowe, there were other associations made with the Turks which denounced them radically. As has already been pointed out,[144] the idolatrous leaders and nation of the Bible were easily paralleled with the Turks and their leaders, or vice versa. The general opinion of Christians was that the Turks were pagans, infidels, or heathens. Marlowe uses the characters of Sigismund and Frederick to voice the attitudes of European Christendom towards the Turks. Frederick, Lord of Bohemia, a Christian country, recalls the cruelties of "these heathnish Turks and Pagans lately made" (2T 2.1.6) and advises Sigismund, the king of Hungary, another Christian country, to "work revenge upon these Infidels" (2T 2.1.13). He places the conflict between the Christians and the Turks on the grounds

144. See above, p. 252 and n. 46; pp. 254-255.

of Christianity versus paganism as he tells Sigismund to take advantage of the weakened position of Orcanes. Orcanes had already aptly assessed the importance of his position in that part of the world when he had said: "My realme, the Center of our Empery / Once lost, all Turkie would be overthrowne" (2T 1.1.55-56) and, for this reason, had made peace with the Christians in order to concentrate Turkish forces on Tamburlaine. However, ignoring the taint of treachery that his new stand implies, Frederick argues that, by attacking the remaining army of Orcanes,

> . . . in the fortune of their overthrow,
> We may discourage all the pagan troope,
> That dare attempt to war with Christians.
> (2T 2.1.24-26)

He, Sigismund, and Baldwin eventually base the validity of their agreed treachery on the fact that they are dealing with mere infidels,

> . . . for with such Infidels,
> In whom no faith nor true religion rests,
> We are not bound to those accomplishments,
> The holy lawes of Christendome injoine,[145]
> (2T 2.1.33-36)

as for instance keeping one's pledges made with them. They feel dutifully bound to "scourge their foule blasphemous Paganisme" (2T 2.1.53), that of the Turks, and feel confident that the noble motive of assailing the pagan (2T 2.1.62) makes the victory certain.[146] However, confident as they are, they meet with death and disaster. In many ways, this scene is symbolic of the position of the Christians of Europe at that time with regard to the Islamic threat. The Varna incident,[147] from which this episode is derived, was typical of the many times the European Christian armies had engaged in battle with the Turks. Fully confident of victory, Sigismund and Frederick

---

145. See below, App. B.

146. Sigismund is ready to "take the victorie our God hath given" (2T 2.1. 63) even before the battle has begun, so sure is he that the purpose of the engagement justifies the means taken.

147. See below, App. B.

had met with utter disaster.[148] In a sense, in spite of the blameworthy treachery of these two Christian leaders, this incident gave the dramatist the opportunity to show the Christians' view of the Turks. Moreover, the sharp contrast in the moral images of the Christians as opposed to that of the Turks was brought out in the words of the dying Sigismund. Christian belief opened up the prospects of "a second life in endlesse mercie" (2T 2.3.9)[149] even to the perjured Sigismund, while the Turks, including Bajazet, were doomed to an eternity in hell, the place reserved for idols and idolaters.

Frederick's and Sigismund's breach of promise to keep their treaty with Orcanes was also symbolic of the moral ills prevailing among the Christian nations of the time. Chroniclers and historians[150] held these evils responsible for the Christians' persistent failures to curb the Turks. However, the study of this episode is especially relevant here in that it reflects the attitudes of the Christians in general with respect to the threat of the Turks. The Turkish menace is identified with that of the threat of paganism and paganism supposes idolatry.

In addition to this, one wonders if Marlowe did not yet resort to other means in order that his hero may elicit the anticipated sympathetic response from his audience. As was mentioned before, the words "Turk" and Turkish" were loaded with connotations of idolatry and treachery, connotations which were most meaningful in an Elizabethan context. These words were symbolic of evils of all shade and character. The dramatist had to create conceptual

---

148. The battle at Nicopolis also was such an event: see above, pp. 72-73.

149. One must remember that of the three Christian characters, Sigismund is the one closest to moral integrity and, therefore, most prepared to display genuine repentance. This climax to the scene is of Marlowe's invention. It probably helped to still any qualms of uneasiness among the spectators about the attitude and behaviour of the Christians with respect to the Turks, if there were any such qualms. The Christian Sigismund, by Elizabethan standards, emerges in a position morally superior to that of the Turks. No matter what he had done, Sigismund was on his way to the celestial Jerusalem while the only way open to any Turk was that of hell.

150. See above, p. 40. See below, pp. 452 ff. and App. B.

frameworks built on themes other than the Christian-Islamic religious issues if he wished to associate Bajazet with the odium of evil and, at the same time, link the name of Tamburlaine with an orthodoxy acceptable to his audience.[151] One wonders if Marlowe did not rely on certain linguistic patterns or formulae in his manner of using the terms "Turk" and "Turkish" to fulfil their share of that function. These words abound in the text of the play.[152] Sometimes they are used in a straightforward manner; at other times, they are seemingly introduced for the purpose of reflecting or of creating the antagonism Marlowe's contemporaries had for anything Turkish. In comparison with the use of the phrase "The Turk" and other forms of it,[153] Tamburlaine resorts to the name of Bajazet[154] rather sparsely and, when he does, the word is loaded with scorn and contempt. Either Tamburlaine uses the name in defiance of the protocol which his humble social origins should impel him to respect with regard to the great emperor of the Turks (1T 3.3.65) or, elsewhere, one can sense how much he delights in the ring of the name of the great Bajazet duced to grovel on the ground as a captive of the now great Tamburlaine.[155] If Tamburlaine's manner of uttering the name "Bajazet" reflects the Scythian's contempt and hatred for him, his use of "the Turk", "the mighty Turk" and other similar terms voices the whole spectrum of inimical feelings which centuries of warfare and antagonism had accumulated upon and associated with these words, including connotations of idolatry. The frequency with which these expressions occur would be sufficient to keep

---

151. See below, pp. 446 ff. and 591 ff.

152. The words "Turk" and "Turks" together occur over forty times in the play, while the word "Turkish" is used no fewer than twenty times.

153. Bajazet is referred to as "the Turk" or its equivalents on almost twenty different occasions of which more than half are used by Tamburlaine himself.

154. The name "Bajazet" is used eight times in this way by Tamburlaine.

155. See 1T 4.2.80, 85, 97; 4.4.10; 5.1.192.

the audience ever mindful of the wrongs to be righted and of the evil of idolatry to be scourged.

For some reason difficult to define, the word "Turkish" intensifies the odium of evil cast upon the "heathnish Turks and Pagans" (2T 2.1.6). Possibly, the morally objectionable aspects of the Turk inferred from phrases like the "Turkish Pharaoh"[156] are transferred subconsciously or unconsciously, or perhaps fully consciously, to "the Turkish Emperour" (1T 3.1.22; 3.3.37, 87, 234), "the Turkish Empire" (2T 1.3.6), the "Turkish arms" (1T 3.3.134; 2T 1.3.144), the "Turkish Bajazet" (1T 3.3.191), the "Turkish seas" (2T 1.2.27), "the Turkish crue" (2T 1.3.108), to "that Turkish dog" (2T 3.5.87) Callapine, to the "Turkish harlots" (2T 4.1.165) and "Turkish Concubines" (2T 4.3.64), and not the least, to that "Turkish Alcaron" (2T 5.1.172).[157] Either the word "Turkish" is attached to the more objectionable elements of a Moslem context or it defiles whatever is joined to it. The use of the word in connection with the characters, situations, and aspects of warfare, repeatedly directs the attention of the audience in a perspective of evil and idolatry which cry out for retribution. Thus, elements of the play which could fail to provoke strong emotional responses from a modern audience were probably powerful tools at the disposal of the dramatist. They were capable of stirring the hostile feelings of the audience to a degree of intensity which we could hardly suspect today. One undeniable fact is that the play was an overwhelming stage success from the very first performance.

More associations drawn from the contemporary world of Marlowe could be made with Bajazet or the Turks. The Turk, as an enemy of the true Church, was often placed on equal grounds with the Pope. This idea was not alien to Marlowe. Protestants of his day, both on the Continent and in England,

---

156. See above, p. 252 and n. 46; pp. 254-255.

157. For a possible idolatrous significance attached to this form of spelling of the word "Alcaron", see below, p. 319 and n. 255; p. 320 and notes.

invariably associated Rome and Islam as partners in iniquity.[158] Luther had gone so far as to declare "that the spirit or soul of Antichrist was the Pope, his flesh or body was the Turk".[159] John Foxe linked the Pope and the Turk together again and again in his Acts and Monuments.[160] Numerous allusions on this subject can be found in the homiletic and religious literature of the period.[161] These occur in prayers,[162] in drama,[163] in diatribes,[164]

---

158. See Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 101, n. 1.

159. See ibid.

160. See ibid., p. 102, n.

161. In M.N.'s A Catechisme Composed according to the order of the Catechisme in the Common Prayer 'Booke' containing A briefe Exposition of I - The Creed, II - The Ten Commandements, III - The Lords Prayer, IV - The Sacraments (London, 1631 ed.), the author hopes that "Sathans tyrannie may bee abolished, and all the cursed instruments thereof, as the Turke, the Pope, and all their adherents may be defeated": see pp. 50-51. In A Short Svmme of the Whole Catechisme wherein the question is propounded and answered, for the greater ease of the common people and Children ... of a parish in Southwark (London, 1619), in which the epistle to the reader is dated 1592, Thomas Ratliffe, the minister of the same parish, has chosen to include this passage on the notion of what a catholic Church should be. It should be "an vniuersall Church dispersed through the face of the whole earth, not tyed vnto any certaine place, as vnto Asia and Africa, as the Turke doth imagine, that is, as the Idolaters doe imagine, nor vnto Rome, as the Papists doe imagine, but in all places ...": see sig. B 5v - B 6. One may point out that here the Pope is an enemy of the Church like the Turk who is a recognized idolater. Whetstones wonders whether the Pope's "hypocrisie haue wrought more mischiefe in the West, or the Turkes open tyrannies in the East": see op. cit., n. 35, p. 48. Matthew Sutcliffe published in 1599 a book bearing the following significant title: De Turco-Papismo, hoc est De Turcorum et Papistarum adversus Christi ecclesiam et fidem Conjuratione, eorumque in religione et moribus consensione et similitudine: see Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 102, n. Chew says that this kind of polemics must be kept in mind if one wishes to understand the various allusions to be found in the literature of the period: see ibid. Thomas explains the Renaissance belief that the conversion of the Jews, the defeat of the Turks and the fall of Rome would be the series of spectacular and symbolic events ushering in the end of the world: see op. cit., n. 18, p. 141. See above, pp. 240 ff.; p. 246, notes 19, 20.

162. Chew quotes a prayer taken from Select Poetry Chiefly Devotional of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, ed. Edward Farr (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1845, Part ii, p. 528) which goes like this: "As from the Turke, so shield us, Lord, / From force of popish power": see op. cit., n. 3, p. 102 n.

163. Falstaff mentions the "Turk Gregory" (1 Henry IV 5.3.46): quoted in Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 102 n.

164. In Syr Dauid Lindsey's A Dialogue betweene Experience and a Courtier, of

(continued overleaf .....

in puns,[165] in sculpture themes,[166] and in songs[167] of Marlowe's day and after. The general attitude was that the Pope was the great enemy to true religion from within [168] while, as it was said, the Turk was the enemy

---

164. Continued ..... the miserable state of the Worlde (London, 1581), Pope Alexander III's despicable manner of crowning Frederick the Emperor is described: see fol. 68. This text was possibly the source Marlowe used for the lines 915-920 in Doctor Faustus. Pope Silvester, for his equally despicable manner of crowning Henry the Emperor, is compared to "a proud Lucifer": see ibid., fol. 69v. Later among the many Antichrists, whose existence is to be deplored, comes this description:

> Who was greater antechrist,
> And more contrarious vnto Christ,
> Than the false Prophet Mahumet?
> Whose cursed lawes such strength did get,
> That still in Turky they are obserued
> Whereby hell fyre he hath deserued.
> All Turkes, Sarazens, and Iewes,
> Which do the sonne of God refuse,
> Are Antechristes I thee declare,
> Because to Christ they are contrare.

See ibid., fol. 79. Later, in a description of the Last Judgement, appear the following lines:

> With Mahumet shall come without doubt,
> Of Antichristes a hideous rout,
> Bishop Annas and Cayphas,
> With him in company shall pass.
> . . . . . .
> And many a Turke and Sarazene,
> With greate sorow there shall be seene,
> And Popes for their owne traditions
> Agaynst Gods institutions,
> With many a coule and shauen crowne,
> Whiche Christes lawes have trodden downe.

See ibid., fol. 87v. The fate awaiting Popes and Turks is very similar.

165. In Purchas (viii, 25), the author associates an elaborate oriental headdress with the papal tiara in "This Urban the second (the second Turban)": quoted in Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 102 n.

166. Chew mentions a statue in Switzerland which represents Liberty standing in triumph over two prostrate forms, the one wearing a tiara, the other a turban: see op. cit., n. 3, p. 102 n.

167. "What can you do for the Great Turk? / What can you do for the Pope of Rome?": quoted from Lodowick Barry's play Ram-Alley or Merry Tricks (IV, i; Hazlitt's Dodsley, x, 350), in Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 102, n.

168. Horne speaks of "that darke and superstitious climate of Papistical Paganisme": see op. cit., n. 24, p. 135. For comparisons of the Pope to a "Lateran Iupeter", a "Caiphas, high-preist [sic] of Rome", "the

(continued overleaf .....)

from without.[169] Even the Bible had its marginal notes to that effect. Biblical comments on the Book of Revelation describe the Pope and the Turk as evils about to be annihilated. They were the allies of Satan as the following note makes obvious: "Albeit Satan by the Pope, Turke and other instruments troubleth the worlde neuer so muche, yet Christ shal reigne".[170] While the Pope, to whom the Turk was equated, was identified as the Antichrist, the "king of hypocrites and Satans ambassadour",[171] the great destroyer of the Apocalypse was perceived as Arabians, Turks, Saracens, and Tartarians.[172] Elsewhere the condemned cities of Revelation merely signified "all strange religions, as of the Iewes, Turkes and others, which then shal fall with that great whore of Rome, and be tormented in eternal paines".[173] This sort of vituperative comment abounds in the Biblical notes, especially in the Geneva version of the Book of Revelation. Other passages identify the "diuers and strange enemies of the Church of God, as the Turke, the Sarazins and others, ..., by whome the Church of God shulde be grieuously tormented".[174] Consequently, it is not surprising that Marlowe should have included at least one line reflecting this notion. At one point in the play, he makes Tamburlaine visualize the behaviour of his four enemies in comparison with the capture of the Persian crown which he anticipates. Before he meets Cosroe on the battlefield, he assures Theridamas in the following words:

---

168. Continued ..... great Antichrist", etc.: see King, op. cit., n. 34, pp. 23-24. See also John King, A Sermon preached at Whitehall the 5. Day of Nouember. ... 1608 (Oxford, 1608), p. 24.

169. "So that as the Pope hath gotten to name, domesticus Turce, a homeborne Turke, so the Turke may as iustly be called exterus Papa, a forraine Pope, they communicate so neerly in cruelty": see King, op. cit., n. 168, p. 24.

170. G.V., Rev. 11:15, n. (x).

171. G.V., Rev. 9:11, n. (x).

172. See G.V., Rev. 9:14, n. (a).

173. G.V., Rev. 16:19, n. (t).

174. G.V., Rev. 20:8, n. (n).

. . . if I prosper, all shall be as sure,
As if the Turke, the Pope, Affrike and Greece
Came creeping up to us with their crownes apace.
(1T 2.5.84-86)

The Pope and the Turk are listed with others as Tamburlaine's enemies, as they were of the Elizabethans. Tamburlaine is thus a champion against these foes and fulfils a role similar to that of the Elizabethans. This allusion might be another basis, however unobtrusive, upon which links of sympathy could be established between Tamburlaine and his audience.

Thus, while respecting the main geographical and historical truths about Tamburlaine and Bajazet, Marlowe resorts to various devices in order to differentiate the Moslem image of Tamburlaine from that of Bajazet. The language chosen and used by Marlowe in connection with Bajazet and his colleagues is obviously designed to exploit to the maximum the evil reputation of the Turks in order that he may build up and preserve an intense contempt for the Turkish Bajazet and for his colleagues and successors. Marlowe presents Bajazet as the orthodox Moslem devoted to the practices of Islam. However, the Biblical episodes and characters connected with the evil of idolatry which these practices evoke make the Moslem Bajazet odious to the Christians. Moreover, Marlowe creates a Moslem or an idolatrous setting for his characters by taking care that the analogies he draws from his contemporary world carry a generous share of idolatrous connotations which he associates either directly or indirectly with Bajazet. Thus, Bajazet is either personally involved with the evil of idolatry or, by his own allusions, creates an idolatrous setting for himself and for his colleagues. By these allusions, Bajazet is ranked among the enemies of God or of Israel as a kind of Biblical Pharaoh on whom falls the onus of defeat as in Biblical warfare. Moreover, Bajazet is Tamburlaine's enemy as the Pope would be by Elizabethan standards. Obviously, Marlowe relies heavily on thought patterns entertained by the Elizabethans with respect to their position in face of idolatrous practices, whatever or wherever these may be exercised, to create a moral image of Bajazet which is condemnable from every angle. As a result of the associations

and the connotations used by Marlowe, Bajazet stands out as an idolatrous Moslem worthy of the wrath of the Biblical God or of his wrath personified in the character of Tamburlaine. Bajazet's moral and religious position in the play is shared by his Turkish colleagues: they are all idolaters.

On the other hand, Marlowe keeps Tamburlaine free, at least apparently for the time being, from any idolatrous connotations. Tamburlaine is not associated with any Moslem practices and expresses no devotion to Mahomet. Indeed, the dramatist seems to suggest in subtle ways a certain kinship between his hero and God's warriors of Israel. The fact that the idolatrous Bajazet is presented in terms which recall the Biblical Pharaohs places his antagonist at the opposite pole of the enmity. Tamburlaine fulfils a role similar to that of Israel and, by extension, to that of the Elizabethans, a fact which is suggested and supported by a few allusions skilfully used to project Tamburlaine's armies in a favourable light morally. Thus the critic is tempted to associate Tamburlaine with a certain degree of orthodoxy which would make him somewhat compatible with the Christian's ethical framework. However, Tamburlaine's orthodoxy arises rather from what Marlowe does not say about him or from what Tamburlaine does not do in contrast to Bajazet's dramatic performance. There is no absolute basis for Tamburlaine's orthodoxy. Tamburlaine is made acceptable on moral grounds by what he is not in contrast to what Bajazet is, rather than by what he really reveals about himself. Tamburlaine is neither openly a Moslem nor is he glaringly an idolater. But does this make him necessarily a hero akin to the Biblical or Christian warrior? Of course, the understanding of Marlowe's hero depends on what is read in Tamburlaine's words and actions. Much still remains to be said about Tamburlaine in this respect, especially about his role in the second part of the play. In the meanwhile, the audience, or the reader in this case, is perhaps again invited to applaud Tamburlaine's fortunes, or his orthodoxy in this case, as it, or he, pleases.

In the second part of the play, Marlowe presents other aspects of the

evil of idolatry in connection with the Sigismund-Orcanes incident. This incident is modelled on the Varna episode which Marlowe could have found in the account of Antonius Bonfinius[175] or as retold by Richard Knolles.[176] In Marlowe's version of the incident, the Christian king Sigismund and his Lord Frederick make a truce of peace with the Turkish Orcanes, each side promising to come to the aid of the other in case either should be attacked. Apart from the fact that the Christians are wrongfully turning to infidels for help, the manner in which the pledge is formulated is in itself objectionable. Orcanes sums up the truce with Sigismund in these words: "And solemne covenants we have both confirm'd, / He by his Christ, and I by Mahomet" (2T 2.2.31-32). This oath strongly resembles that of Laban and Jacob described in the Book of Genesis. In the Biblical incident, both swear to keep the peace, Laban by his gods and Jacob by the God of Abraham.[177] This, says the Biblical annotator, was "a wicked fact, to ioyne his false goddes with the true God".[178] Orcanes and Sigismund have made a similar pledge by joining the names of Christ and Mahomet in their promises. Their truce of peace has become another "wicked fact" for which the Christians are to be condemned for their share in it. Were the Elizabethans aware of the similarity between the Orcanes-Sigismund pact and the Laban-Jacob one?

The sequence to the Orcanes-Sigismund treaty poses more problems. A crisis develops when Orcanes learns that Sigismund and Frederick have broken their promises and are proceeding to attack the Turks. Faced with this

---

175. Antonius Bonfinius, Rervm Vngaricarvm ... Decadis III (Francoforti ad Moenvm, 1581), pp. 451-467.

176. See op. cit., n. 42, pp. 288-298. See also below, App. B.

177. Laban swore thus: "The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor (i.e. an idol), and the God of their father be judge between us: but Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac" (i.e. by the true God): Gen. 31:53.

178. B.V., Gen. 31:53, n. (z). "Beholde, how the idolaters mingle the true God with their fayned gods": G.V., Gen. 31:53, n. (n).

desperate situation, Orcanes challenges Christ to prove himself, the "son to everliving Jove" (2T 2.2.41), as powerful as Mahomet. Orcanes formulates the plea as an opportunity given to Christ to restore his honour. Orcanes argues with him that "If he be jealous of his name and honor, / As is our holy prophet Mahomet" (2T 2.2.43-44), and wish to prove himself "a perfect God, / Worthy the worship of all faithfull hearts" (2T 2.2.56-57), he should grant him a victory over the faithless Christians (2T 2.2.36 ff.). The Turks win the battle against the Christian forces. But, in contrast to what might be expected, Orcanes fails to live up to the text of his prayer. At first, he appears to give Christ due credit for the victory "Which we referd to justice of his Christ, / And to his power" (2T 2.3.28-29), but when Gazellus provides a secular explanation for victories: "Tis but the fortune of the wars my Lord, / Whose power is often prooved a myracle" (2T 2.3.31-32), a remark which suggests natural causes for miracles, Orcanes makes reservations about the merits of Christ in this victory and holds Mahomet almost equally responsible for it. Orcanes yields to Gazellus's idea about the role of fortune in the dispensation of victories. This, in itself, would appear incriminating to an Elizabethan audience for, says one Biblical commentary among many others, "the wycked attribute almost al thynges to fortune and chaunce: whereas in deede there is nothing donne without gods prouidence and decree".[179] Orcanes finally concedes:

> Yet in my thoughts shall Christ be honoured,
> Not doeing Mahomet an injurie,
> Whose power had share in this our victory.
>
> (2T 2.3.33-35)

The power of Christ, the Son of God, is not different to any great degree from that of Mahomet, the friend of God, according to Orcanes (2T 2.3.11).

---

179. B.V., 1 Sam. 6:9, n. (c). Thomas Fortescue devotes a full chapter condemning the idolatrous belief in the goddess Fortune: see The Forest or Collection of Historias, (London, 1571), fol. 102v - 106.

desperate situation, Orcanes challenges Christ to prove himself, the "son to everliving Jove" (2T 2.2.41), as powerful as Mahomet. Orcanes formulates the plea as an opportunity given to Christ to restore his honour. Orcanes argues with him that "If he be jealous of his name and honor, / As is our holy prophet Mahomet" (2T 2.2.43-44), and wish to prove himself "a perfect God, / Worthy the worship of all faithfull hearts" (2T 2.2.56-57), he should grant him a victory over the faithless Christians (2T 2.2.36 ff.). The Turks win the battle against the Christian forces. But, in contrast to what might be expected, Orcanes fails to live up to the text of his prayer. At first, he appears to give Christ due credit for the victory "Which we referd to justice of his Christ, / And to his power" (2T 2.3.28-29), but when Gazellus provides a secular explanation for victories: "Tis but the fortune of the wars my Lord, / Whose power is often prooved a myracle" (2T 2.3.31-32), a remark which suggests natural causes for miracles, Orcanes makes reservations about the merits of Christ in this victory and holds Mahomet almost equally responsible for it. Orcanes yields to Gazellus's idea about the role of fortune in the dispensation of victories. This, in itself, would appear incriminating to an Elizabethan audience for, says one Biblical commentary among many others, "the wycked attribute almost al thynges to fortune and chaunce: whereas in deede there is nothing donne without gods prouidence and decree".[179] Orcanes finally concedes:

> Yet in my thoughts shall Christ be honoured,
> Not dooing Mahomet an injurie,
> Whose power had share in this our victory.
>
> (2T 2.3.33-35)

The power of Christ, the Son of God, is not different to any great degree from that of Mahomet, the friend of God, according to Orcanes (2T 2.3.11).

---

179. B.V., 1 Sam. 6:9, n. (c). Thomas Fortescue devotes a full chapter condemning the idolatrous belief in the goddess Fortune: see The Foreste or Collection of Histories, (London, 1571), fol. 102v - 106.

desperate situation, Orcanes challenges Christ to prove himself, the "son to everliving Jove" (2T 2.2.41), as powerful as Mahomet. Orcanes formulates the plea as an opportunity given to Christ to restore His honour. Orcanes argues with him that "If he be jealous of his name and honor, / As is our holy prophet Mahomet" (2T 2.2.43-44), and wish to prove himself "a perfect God, / Worthy the worship of all faithfull hearts" (2T 2.2.56-57), he should grant him a victory over the faithless Christians (2T 2.2.36 ff.). The Turks win the battle against the Christian forces. But, in contrast to what might be expected, Orcanes fails to live up to the text of his prayer. At first, he appears to give Christ due credit for the victory "Which we referd to justice of his Christ, / And to his power" (2T 2.3.28-29), but when Gazellus provides a secular explanation for victories: "Tis but the fortune of the wars my Lord, / Whose power is often prooved a myracle" (2T 2.3.31-32), a remark which suggests natural causes for miracles, Orcanes makes reservations about the merits of Christ in this victory and holds Mahomet almost equally responsible for it. Orcanes yields to Gazellus's idea about the role of fortune in the dispensation of victories. This, in itself, would appear incriminating to an Elizabethan audience for, says one Biblical commentary among many others, "the wycked attribute almost al thynges to fortune and chaunce: whereas in deede there is nothing donne without gods prouidence and decree".[179] Orcanes finally concedes:

> Yet in my thoughts shall Christ be honoured,
> Not doeing Mahomet an injurie,
> Whose power had share in this our victory.
>
> (2T 2.3.33-35)

The power of Christ, the Son of God, is not different to any great degree from that of Mahomet, the friend of God, according to Orcanes (2T 2.3.11).

---

179. B.V., 1 Sam. 6:9, n. (c). Thomas Fortescue devotes a full chapter condemning the idolatrous belief in the goddess Fortune: see The Forests or Collection of Historias, (London, 1571), fol. 102v - 106.

These words are a poor sequence to Orcane's former prayer. Mahomet has resumed much of his former importance among Orcanes's loyalties at the cost of the credit due Christ. Clearly, Orcanes has balanced the divine power of Christ against that of Mahomet and the incident is closed leaving the image of a Christ whose power over events in this world is only slightly superior to that of Mahomet. Orcanes's idea of Christ's power versus that of Mahomet remains ambiguous.

The Christian leaders and the Turkish Orcanes both incur guilt in this scene, the nature of the guilt of each depending to some extent on the place and meaning assigned to Mahomet by either the stage characters, or by the audience, or by both. As has been seen before, to the orthodox Turkish Orcanes, Mahomet is next to divinity. He is the greatest of the prophets and endowed with the noblest prerogatives. However, to the Christian leaders, as well as to the Elizabethans, while the greatness of the founder of Islam cannot be denied, he is no more than a false prophet, an impostor and a fraud, even a devil or Satan, more evil than Beelzebub and a heresiarch of the worst kind.[180] Moreover, the medieval literary and dramatic tradition had demoted Mahomet to the array of false gods, among the most despicable characters in history.[181] In an Elizabethan context, Orcanes has brought Christ down to the level of these characters.

In the face of these considerations, what was the moral image of the Christians at the outcome of the Sigismund-Orcanes episode? First of all, as the Elizabethans knew from the teaching of the Geneva Bible, to join in an alliance with infidels was a most serious evil. Their initiatives were as objectionable as had been those of Asa, a king of Israel, who had also

---

180. See above, pp. 200 ff., and corresponding notes.

181. See pp. 271 ff. and notes.

sought alliances with infidels. The annotator of the Geneva Bible had already drawn the parallel when he had assessed the position of Asa. Asa "thoght to repulse his aduersarie by an vnlawful meanes, that is, by seking helpe of infideles, as they that seke the Turkes amitie, thinking thereby to make them selues more strong".[182] The Bishops Bible more specifically warned that "God reproueth suche leagues as are made with infidels".[183] From the human point of view, Frederick was unfaithful to his word, a breach of honour which Orcanes readily interprets as a betrayal of Christ by whom the pledge was made. Thus, the moral issues attached to the situation of Sigismund and Frederick are complex. Once the pledge is made, no matter what the next course of action is chosen, it is evil in some way. Moreover, they already deserve divine punishment for their involvement with the idolatrous infidel.

Orcanes's devotion to Mahomet was idolatrous by Elizabethan standards. But Orcanes increases his guilt immeasurably also by his own breach of loyalty towards Christ. In a sense, Orcanes's position with regard to Christ is similar to that of Sigismund and Frederick. He, like his Christian counterparts, somewhat fails to keep his word to Christ. Secondly, although balancing the power of Christ against that of Mahomet would be quite natural for a Moslem, the idea is intolerable to an Elizabethan audience. The incident develops into a Christ-versus-Mahomet or a Christ-versus-idol pattern in which the effect of Orcanes's attempts to avoid an injury to Mahomet is to become injurious to Christ. Prayers to Christ have brought about a victory but it is not to be at the expense of Mahomet's prestige according to Orcanes. Thus, he is upholding the power prestige of a mere idol, Mahomet, a point which an Elizabethan would not have missed. In spite of the fact that by balancing the credit for the victory between Christ and Mahomet, Orcanes is

---

182. G.V., 2 Chr. 16:3, n. (c).

183. B.V., 2 Chr. 16:7, n. (a).

simply remaining faithful to the Moslem belief by which Christ and Mahomet were prophets of God, the latter completing the work of the former, yet, in the eyes of Marlowe's contemporaries, this mingling of Christ and Mahomet is discrediting to the Turk. For "the wicked put no difference betwene true religion and false, God and idoles"[184] says another Biblical comment, in this case, between Christ and Mahomet. Orcanes can act as he does precisely because he is a perfect idolater. He has failed to understand who Christ is as opposed to Mahomet. Since in many other instances in the play Mahomet emerges as the helpless idol, as will be proven later, Mahomet's share of the credit can rest only with Orcanes. Mahomet has hitherto been so useless to his followers in their needs that Orcanes's loyalty does little to restore Mahomet's status as a deity. Consequently, Mahomet remains an idol and Orcanes emerges as an idolater. One may remember the fate that was meted out to the idolaters Bajazet and Zabina and, therefore, anticipate, at the same time, that awaiting Orcanes, another idolater. He is last seen on the stage, defeated by Tamburlaine, about to relieve his colleague, another defeated king, in his functions of horsing Tamburlaine's chariot (2T 5.1.136-147), a fate as miserable, painful, and humiliating as that of Bajazet, the footstool and the cur of Tamburlaine. Thus, the Turks, as idolaters, and the Christians, for joining forces with the infidels, meet each with their well-deserved fate.

Marlowe has been accused of rejecting Christ in this scene. However, it should be noticed that the dramatist takes care to reinstate the power and position of Christ in the episode. As shall be seen, of all the prayers one finds in the play, Orcanes's is the only one which does not remain unanswered. Furthermore, Christ remains the silent judge who justly punishes

---

184. G.V., 2 Chr. 32:12,n. (c).

the Christians primarily for their perjury and possibly for their involvement with the infidel while he answers Orcanes's plea. Why did Marlowe include this episode in his play? Undoubtedly, it offered a splendid occasion to present to the public the true contemporary attitude of Christians towards Islam and confirmed at the same time the idolatrous stand of the Turks in the second part of the play. But more important yet, Christ's answer to Orcanes's plea provided a norm against which the marks of devotion of various characters to their respective deities in the play could be compared and a basis upon which the powers of these deities could be assessed. For Orcanes's plea to superhuman powers is not the only instance of its kind in the play.

Prayers are made on several other occasions by various characters and addressed to various powers, as will be examined shortly. Among all these pleas, Bajazet's and Zabina's express the greatest devotion to Mahomet. Zabina first prays Mahomet to ask God for the death of Tamburlaine and his men while her husband is involved in a military engagement with Tamburlaine. She says:

> Now Mahomet, solicit God himselfe,
> And make him raine down murthering shot from heaven
> To dash the Scythians braines, and strike them dead,
> That dare to manage armes with him.
>
> (1T.3.3.195-198).

Zabina's prayer for a direct intervention from heaven recalls several similar pleas in the Bible.[185] After his capture, Bajazet prays the holy priests

---

185. God rained brimstone and fire out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah: see Gen. 19:24. "And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense" to idols under the leadership of Korah: see Num. 16:35. See also Num. 26:10; 1 Kgs. 18:38; 2 Kgs. 1:10, 12, 14. "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares [i.e. quick burning coals], fire and brimstone, ...": Psa. 11:6. "... I will rain upon the many peoples that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone": Ezek. 38:22; 39:6. See also Hos. 8:14; Amos 1:4, 7, 10, etc. "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elijah did?": Luke 9:54. See also ibid., 17:29, etc.

of Mahomet to poison Tamburlaine (1T 4.2.1-6). Elsewhere, as was already mentioned, Zenocrate pleads with Jove and Mahomet to pardon Tamburlaine's ruthless manner of waging war and to forgive her as well for having been so insensitive to the misery of Bajazet and Zabina (1T 5.1.363-370). Olympia begs Mahomet to ask God to forgive her for killing her son before he should fall into the hands of the Scythians (2T 3.4.31 ff.). Callapine asks Mahomet to help him triumph over the "cursed Tamburlaine" (2T 5.2.24 ff.). All these prayers either remain fruitless or are answered in ways undetectable to observers as the case would be for those of Zenocrate and Olympia. In spite of the several pleas to this effect, no one triumphs over Tamburlaine, not even Callapine. Tamburlaine is defeated only by his own human nature subject to the illness and death which come at the moment chosen by "the majestie of heaven".[186] It is significant that during Tamburlaine's illness his followers do not mention Mahomet even once in their pleas to heaven for his cure. Prayers are also addressed to the Christian God by Sigismund who has just been defeated and mortally wounded (2T 2.3.4-9). His feelings of repentance, his sense of contrition in his afflictions, and his awareness that his death opens on to an endless second life of mercy constitute the only orthodox Christian note, apart from the descriptions of God and Christ, in the Moslem world of Tamburlaine. By Christian standards, one may suppose that Sigismund's plea will be fully complied with by God in spite of the fact that Orcanes promptly despatches his soul to hell (2T 2.3.18-26), a Moslem hell[187] at that, immediately

---

186. This expression appears in 1T 4.2.31; 5.1.48; 2T 1.3.155; 4.1.3. See also 2T 4.1.158. Cf. "We haue suche an hie Priest, that sitteth on the right hand of the throne of the maiestie in the heauens": G.V., Heb. 8:1.

187. Ethel seaton, in "Fresh Sources for Marlowe", RES 5(1929), pp. 385-387, has compared Marlowe's text describing Orcanes's hell with the Moslem hell described in the sources he obviously used. According to Seaton, Marlowe's arrangement of ideas and sentences closely corresponds with that of Lonicerus. I quote Seaton's collation of Lonicerus's text with Marlowe's in full:

> Now scaldes his soule in the Tartarian streames,
> And feeds upon the banefull tree of hell,
> That 'zoacum', that fruit of bytternesse,

(continued overleaf .....)

after his death. This remains the only instance of prayer completely untainted by any connotations of or associations with idolatry in the whole play.

Of all the other prayers made in Marlowe's play, only twice are they possibly answered and yet, on one of these occasions, there is much room left for doubt. During the first part of the play, while Tamburlaine and Bajazet are engaged in battle, Zenocrate prays the Gods and powers of Persia that Tamburlaine's venture may be successful (1T 3.3.189-194). One may hastily conclude that Zenocrate's prayers were answered and that the powers of Persia did intervene on behalf of her husband, but it must be observed that Tamburlaine's destiny seems to be governed in so extraordinary a manner that agents other than the powers of Persia[188] are probably responsible for Tamburlaine's achievements. Under the auspices of these agents, Tamburlaine was destined

---

187. Continued .....

(Credunt praeterea arborem, quam vocant 'Zoacum agacci' hoc est, amaritudinis.)

That in the midst of fire is ingraft,
(in medio inferni, licet igni quasi infixam,)

Yet flourisheth as Flora in her pride,
(florere.)

With apples like the heads of damned Feends,
(cuius singula poma diabolorum capitibus sint similia.)

(Fructibus arboris istius damnati vescuntur, sperantes inde refrigerationem aliquam se percepturos. Verum non solum nihil inde refrigerationis percipiunt, sed amaro venenatoque sapore magis magisque excruciantur, gravioribus inde mortis torminibus afficiuntur.)

The Dyvils there in chaines of quenchlesse flame,
(tum etiam diaboli ipsi ignitis eos catenis constrictos)

Shall lead his soule through Orcus burning gulfe:
From paine to paine, whose change shall never end.
((ne una poenarum tormentorumque sit facies) assidue volutant.)

See 2T 2.3.18-26; Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 109, Tomvs I, fol. 64v. Seaton notes that Marlowe follows Lonicerus's spelling for the word "Zoacum". The notions of the tree of Zoacum (spelt "Zakkoum" in the Koran) coming from the bottom of hell, with fruits like the heads of Satans, tasting of boiling oil or water, which the damned will be forced to eat as a "sinner's food", all in a context of a never-ending fire, are present in the texts of the Koran: see J.M. Rodwell, trans. and ed., The Koran (London, 1974 reprinted ed.), p. 81, sura 37:60 ff.; p. 90, sura 44:44 ff.; p. 67, sura 56:52; p. 296, sura 7:36.

188. See below, p. 84 and n. 246; p. 85 and n. 251; p. 86.

to succeed anyway and Zenocrate's prayers in this case cannot appear other than futile. The other instance, as was mentioned before, is the desperate plea which Orcanes makes to Christ,[189] the only prayer in the play which obviously is effective. While the incident is a witness to the Biblical comment that "prayer is the godly mans refuge in trouble",[190] an idea which Agydas has so aptly expressed in the image of the seaman caught in a storm who:

> All fearfull foldes his sailes and sounds the maine,
> Lifting his prayers to the heavens for aid,
> Against the terror of the winds and waves.
> (1T 3.2.82-84)

and, although the image of the Moslem Orcanes as a "godly man" is open to question, it is most worthy of note that Marlowe should have chosen Christ to be the only one to hear and answer prayers in so astounding a manner. One has to regognize that Christ emerges triumphant in a scene which condemns and punishes the Christians for their treachery, which presents Orcanes as an idolater, and which ultimately justifies Tamburlaine's continued role as Scourge of God. Christ is above the conflicting elements of this scene.

From what has been said already about the status of Mahomet in the play in connection with the expressions of Bajazet's cult for the Prophet, one senses that Mahomet belongs to the realms of the gods and, for this reason, moulds to some extent the action of the play. This calls for further investigation into the concept of Mahomet the idol and the bearing it has on Marlowe's characters, in particular on Tamburlaine himself. However, before we proceed to the analysis of Mahomet the idol, a few more points must be brought to the reader's attention.

Mahomet is presented as a close associate of God. Moslems spoke of him as the Prophet of God. The Islamic creed ran as follows: "There is only

---

189. See above, pp. 291 ff.

190. B.V., Gen. 32:9, n. (d).

one God Allah and Mahomet is his Prophet".[191] Marlowe ignores the Islamic creed altogether throughout the ten acts of Tamburlaine. The word "prophet" appears only twice in the text and that in one scene of the second part of the play. The first time, the word is used by Gazellus in connection with the Christians who care "so litle for their prophet Christ" (2T 2.2.35) since they can break oaths made by him so easily. The second time, the word is mentioned by Orcanes who is already implying a comparison between Christ and his "holy prophet Mahomet". Thus the idea of Mahomet as the Prophet of God appears only once and is used to bring Christ down to the level of the prophet of Islam. However, Marlowe has coined a special phrase to refer to Mahomet, a phrase which reflects the spiritual position, good or bad, of the Prophet of Islam. Mahomet is frequently addressed as "the friend of God" (2T 1.1.137)[192] or as an equal of God in the play (2T 3.1.3; 4.1.121; etc.). Perhaps this expression was intended, possibly remotely, but nevertheless in some degree to be analogous to that of Christ, "the Son of God", and even to that of Tamburlaine, "the Scourge of God", each case implying that Mahomet, Christ, and Tamburlaine enjoyed womewhat the same kind of divine powers and prerogatives.

Furthermore, as was mentioned before, prayers are made on several occasions in the play. Before the dead bodies of the Turk and his queen, Zenocrate prays to "myghty Jove and holy Mahomet" (1T 5.1.363) to pardon Tamburlaine and

---

191. "Il n'est point d'autre Dieu que le vrai Dieu, Mahomet est son Apôtre": quoted by Vattier, op. cit., n. 96, p. 43. T.W. Arnold identifies the Koranic texts from which the two parts of the creed are taken. The first comes from sura 47:21: "Know, then, that there is no God but God", and the second from sura 48:29: "Muhammad is the Apostle of God". See ed. cit., n. 187, pp. 384 and 463. See also T.W. Arnold, The Islamic Faith (London, 1928), p. 5.

192. Was Marlowe aware that this designation was reserved especially for Abraham? Horne notes that Abraham was called "the friend of God": see op. cit., n. 24, p. 26. The modern version of the Bible has "Abraham, the Friend of God" as topic-title to Gen. 18: see Scofield, ed. cit., n. 102, p. 27. In relation to this title, the reader is directed to the words of Christ when he explains the status of a friend as opposed to that of the slave. "The friend" is one who knows all the things heard from the Father, who knows the secrets of God: see John 15:15. One may recall that Islam has a great veneration for Abraham as the first Biblical character called upon to fight against idolatry.

herself for their ruthless attitudes towards the captive Bajazet and Zabina. Later, the Soldan holds God and Mahomet equally responsible for Tamburlaine's victory over him (1T 5.1.479). These are the only two occasions in the first part of the play when Mahomet is mentioned in connection with God or Jove. In view of the tragic circumstances of Bajazet's and Zabina's captivity and death which absorb the attention of the audience, these two instances are not especially meaningful and would probably pass quite unnoticed. But this is not so with respect to the allusions to Mahomet in the second part of the play. Except when Tamburlaine, blinded with anger over the defection of Calyphas, uses the expression with utter contempt (2T 4.1.121), the idea of "Mahomet, the friend of God" or its equivalent, occurs on the lips of Orcanes, Callapine, and his assistant Amasia, all of them being Turks. Orcanes pledges his truce of peace with the Christians "by sacred Mahomet, the friend of God" (2T 1.1.137). Later he credits "the aid of God and his friend Mahomet" (2T 3.1.3) for Callapine's successful escape from captivity under Tamburlaine. Callapine supposes a kind of fellowship exists between Mahomet and Jove who opens the heavens to see Callapine's slaughter of Tamburlaine's men (2T 3.5. 55-57). Later, he hopes for a victory over Tamburlaine "if God or Mahomet send any aide" (2T 5.2.11). Amasia tries to stimulate his master's hopes by wishing Callapine a victory over Tamburlaine even "Though God himselfe and holy Mahomet / Should come in person to resist your power" (2T 5.2.37-38). By Biblical standards, the practice of associating God with an idol was considered to be evil and cast the odium of idolatry upon those who did so. One might remark that such a usage could be quite normal in an Islamic context, but, in view of Mahomet's status as a god in the play and in view of the several pertinent comments in the Bible which condemn the practice of placing God on par with the gods, one cannot simply ignore the expressions which treat Mahomet as an equal, or almost, of God. In fact, Moslems in the play could be considered to act like the peoples of Samaria who were condemned by the Biblical annotators because they "professed God, but worshiped idoles

also, and therefore were the greatest enemies to the true seruants of God".[193] The Samaritans and the Moslems therefore shared a similar spiritual status, that of being idolaters. Did Marlowe deliberately put in these expressions to cast the odium of idolatry on Orcanes, Callapine, and Amasia? Was the main purpose of introducing these expressions to build up and preserve the climate of idolatry, a climate which would justify Tamburlaine's presence and action as the Scourge of God especially in the second part of the play?

If the dramatist intentionally chooses to make the Turks refer to Mahomet as a divinity, intermediary or almost equal to God as "the friend of God", in order that the audience may be kept constantly alert to the presence of idolatry in the play, if he takes pains to ensure that prayers addressed to Mahomet or to the idols of Egypt and others, all of which are more or less the equivalents of Mahomet,[194] remain sterile efforts, what does he do about the image of Mahomet himself? So far the theme of idolatry has been investigated by focusing the reader's attention mainly on the presence and the activities of the supposed idolaters in the play. But a study of Mahomet the idol himself must now be made if Bajazet is to be incriminated for his idolatry and Tamburlaine justified for his manner of treating him, if an objectionable climate of idolatry is to be preserved throughout the play in order that Tamburlaine's continued role as the Scourge of God be aptly motivated and vindicated, and if the spiritual entity of Mahomet is to be the basis by which the spiritual dimension of Tamburlaine is to be differentiated from that of his victims. Two sources could offer materials which Marlowe might have used to dramatize the definition of a false god or of Mahomet the idol in this case. One was the descriptions and conventional patterns of behaviour associated with the Biblical idols; the other was the long tradition which had used Biblical clichés to portray or dramatize the role and action of Mahomet as an idol.

---

193. G.V., Ezra 4:1, n. (a).

194. See Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 390.

Because the Bible is the story of the relationship of God with his chosen people, paradoxical as this may seem, idols and idolatry are also very much Biblical themes which conjure up their own train of episodes, anathemas, and punitive disasters. The theme of idolatry in the Bible helps to explain the true God. By means of comparisons, direct or inferred, between idols and the Biblical God, the Bible can present what idols are not as opposed to what God is and what idols cannot do as opposed to what God can do. The polytheism practised by Israel's idolatrous neighbours, by contrast, constantly emphasizes the monotheism of the people of God. Consequently, for one familiar with the Scriptures, it is impossible to mention traits of false gods without intimating, at the same time, the attributes of the true God. For this reason, among many others, the theme of the conventional image of idols cannot be divorced from the Biblical text.

What has been said above suggests that the analysis of the presence of Mahomet as a god in the play implies a study of the Prophet in contrast to the true Biblical God. It also implies discovering among his followers the belief that unusual powers reside in Mahomet, that he is greater than human, and that he enjoys divine attributes which may exercise a control over events, persons, and even over the physical world. It also implies the fact that Mahomet will be, at the very least, an intermediary between the worshippers and the one God and an object of veneration as a god. How does Marlowe deal with these various aspects related to Mahomet as an idol or a false god?

First of all, it must be recalled that, according to modern research, Mohammed never posed as a god during his lifetime nor was he acclaimed as such by any of his followers.[195] At most, was he a man blessed by unusual mystical experiences. As was mentioned before, the deification of Mohammed

---

195. According to Hamidullah, Mahomet never claimed to be more than a restorer of divine truth: see op. cit., n. 9, p. 10. Mahomet is not considered to be a god by the Moslems: see Louis Gardet, Dieu et la destinée de l'homme (Paris, 1967), pp. 148-149.

was a posthumous phenomenon.[196] The notion of Mahomet as a god, while it was not unanimously accepted by any means,[197] subsequently travelled down the ages, far and wide into many countries. In the early Middle Ages, William of Malmesbury, in his Gesta regum Anglorum,[198] had rejected the idea. Long before the days of Marlowe, he had affirmed that the Saracens and the Turks worshipped God the creator, that they did not consider Mahomet as a god but as a prophet of God.[199] But Malmesbury's manuscript was to remain concealed from the public for generations yet to come.[200] Other attempts to correct the legends circulating about Mahomet's deity remained unfruitful. According to popular opinion, Mahomet was believed to be an idol or a false god, or else a heresiarch.[201] The idea of Mahomet, a god, occurs early in the Middle Ages, for instance in the Chanson de Roland.[202] Mahomet often appears then as the most prominent of an entire pantheon of pagan gods[203] and often stands alone as a god of the pagans[204] in the metrical romances when he is not referred to as a devil.[205] The ramifications of the conception of the idol Mahomet

---

196. See above, pp. 181 ff.

197. See above, pp. 220-221.

198. See Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 387.

199. "Saraceni et Turchi Deum creatorem colunt, Mahumet non Deum, sed eius prophetam aestimantes": quoted from Gesta regum Anglorum. Book ii, 189, in Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 387.

200. See Chew, ibid.

201. See ibid., p. 388.

202. See ibid.

203. In the popular mind of medieval Christendom, the three gods, "Mahomet the chief divinity of the pagans, Apollo, representative of the fallen Olympians and Termagant, chief of the devils" formed "an unholy Saracenic trinity blasphemously analogous" to the Trinity of the Christians. However, there is little evidence to show that this belief had spread to England according to Chew: see ibid., p. 389.

204. See ibid.

205. See ibid., n. 1.

are numerous. Statues of the idol figure in, among other writings, Cervantes's Quixote.[206] The writers of the English Cyclical Plays assumed that pagans in general worshipped Mahomet. Pharaoh exhorts his followers to pray to Mahound in their needs. Caesar Augustus prays to the same god. Herod swears by Mahomet and threatens to destroy those who do not believe in "sant Mahowne, our god so sweet".[207] Nemerous are the allusions in medieval literature to idols like "Mahomets" or "Maumets" which were revered even in Egypt.[208]

According to Chew, Mahomet does not appear in any extant English miracle or mystery play, except in Mary Magdalene, but only in metrical romances.[209] Yet, Chew holds the opinion that the tradition of the idol Mahomet survived in the time of Elizabeth.[210] He quotes Fulke Greville's lines to prove his point: "Mahomet himself an idol makes, / And draws mankind to Mecha for his sake".[211] Mahomet the idol plays a conspicuous part in several Elizabethan plays.[212] Chew affirms that a deep-seated credulity "continued to fasten the charge of idolatry upon the rigid iconoclasts of Islam"[213] in spite of the efforts of learned Arabists like John Selden who denied the Christian libel in these words:

> They call'd Images Mammetts and the adoration of Images Mammetry, that is Mahometts and Mahometry, odious names, when all the world knowes the Turkes are forbidden Images by their Religion.[214]

---

206. See ibid., p. 390.

207. See ibid.

208. See ibid., p. 391 and n. 1.

209. See ibid., pp. 392 and 394.

210. See ibid., p. 395.

211. Quoted from A Treatise of Monarchy. Stanza 518, from Works. I, 185, in Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 395.

212. The idol Mahomet is found in Robert Greene's Alphonsus, King of Arragon, in Robert Daborne's A Christian Turn'd Turke, in John Mason's The Turk, etc.: see Chew, op. cit., n. 3, pp. 395-396.

213. Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 395.

214. Ibid., pp. 395-396.

Islamic monotheism should have ruled out even the possibility of legends promoting the cult of Mahomet as a god. However, Marlowe would have been somewhat an exception to his times if he had not included in his play some contemporary notions about Mahomet the idol.

As was mentioned before,[215] Mahomet is honoured as a divinity in the play especially by Bajazet and Zabina. Substantial gifts have been made to him in his shrine by the Turkish monarchs.[216] Bajazet[217] and Callapine[218] are linked with the idea of sacrifices, human or strongly suggested as being so, as expressions of homage to Mahomet. Such activities of devotional cult to Mahomet condemned both the object of the cult and the ones participating. Thus, Mahomet as an object of such practices and Bajazet and Callapine as participants were condemned as idol and idolaters respectively. Besides, as a Biblical comment explained, "sacrifising to false gods is the denyeing of one true God".[219] One may add that sacrificing to an entity other than the true God made of this entity a false god. The status of Mahomet could not be anything but that of an idol.

Twice in the play, references are made to Mahomet, the god. First, Zabina deplores her state and that of Bajazet and looks for an answer and a solution to their plight:

> Then is there left no Mahomet, no God,
> No Feend, no Fortune, nor no hope of end
> To our infamous monstrous slaveries?
> (1T 5.1.239-241)

The lament could well be the answer, or a second question coming upon a first one, which Marlowe's audience, familiar with the Biblical text, would have

---

215. See above, pp. 271 ff.

216. See ibid.

217. See above, pp. 271 ff.

218. See above, pp. 277 ff.

219. B.V., Exod. 22:19, n. (m).

remembered and perhaps have uttered silently: "Where is their god?".[220] Although the phrase "no Mahomet, no God" could be but part of a list of powers greater than human, yet it would seem to place Mahomet among the deities and Zabina among idolaters. One may note that Marlowe associates Mahomet and a god like him with a fiend, the equivalent to a devil, a none too flattering company, but one in keeping with the current associations made with Mahomet, idols, and devils. All of these were inmates of hell. An appeal to Fortune[221] was also proper to wicked people, as we have seen, at least by Biblical standards.[222] Zabina morally condemns herself here by the evil nature of the powers in whom she places her hopes for help after having failed to secure that of Mahomet. Her enumeration could not end on any other note but that of despair; she has "no hope of end" (1T 5.1.240). Thus the place of Mahomet the idol or the god in these lines is presented in a most unfavourable light. The second allusion to Mahomet the god comes from the lips of Tamburlaine himself. He is, as we shall see, thoroughly disillusioned about "that Mahomet, / Whom [he had] thought a God" (2T 5.1.174-175). Thus, the theme of the deity of Mahomet is present in the play; what else does Marlowe say about this god?

In several ways, Marlowe resorts to the traditional Biblical image of idols to sketch the image of Mahomet the god. Idols in the Bible were known to be "sleepy".[223] Chew mentions several instances of heathen gods and idols

---

220. Joel 2:17. See also Ps. 42:3; 42:10. Obviously, this supposes that, at some point, Bajazet and Zabina had said, at least tacitly, to Mahomet: "You are our god", a deed of idolatrous worship similar to "Ye are our gods": see Isa. 42:17. Zabina's line recalls Isaiah's "Who is he among all the gods of these lands that hath delivered ...?": Isa. 36:20. "Wherefore shal the heathen saie: 'Where is now their God?'": G.V., Ps. 115:2. The presence of calamities leads observers to question about the power of the gods worshipped by those in adversity. Bajazet and Zabina have become an example of "when the wicked se that God accomplisheth not his promes, as thei imagine, thei thinke there is no God": G.V., Ps. 115:2, n. (b). See also Deut. 32:37; Ps. 79:10.

221. See above, p. 292 and n. 179.

222. See ibid.

223. See Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 391, n. 4.

in medieval romances being chided for sleeping too long and too soundly, "sleepie Mahomet" being one of them.[224] The same author understands these allusions to be echoes of Elijah's taunts "Peradventure he sleepeth"[225] about the idol Baal whose powers the idolatrous priests were testing without success. Marlowe includes such a line in his play. The prisoner Bajazet cries out from the depth of his misery his plea for help from the Moslem Prophet and laments over the deafness of Mahomet in his invocation: "O Mahomet, Oh sleepie Mahomet" (1T 3.3.269). Needless to say that Bajazet is left unrelieved in his misery. Mahomet is deaf to this cry of pain and reproach for his neglect. Sleepy Baal could not oblige his priests; neither can Mahomet take heed of his servant. The very expression "sleepie Mahomet" recalls the Biblical incident of Baal's priests[226] and, by association, places Mahomet among the false gods of Israel. Mahomet is deaf as was Baal; he is truly an idol.[227] This attitude is the opposite to that of God as he is described in the Bible[228] as well as elsewhere in the play when Orcanes describes the God of Islam. For the God of Orcanes is the God "that sits on high and never sleeps" (2T 2.2.49). If Orcanes is unorthodox in practice by his mingling of Christ and Mahomet, he is certainly true to his faith in Islam whose monotheism is copied from that of Israel. A "sleepy idol" cannot hear the pleas that are made to him while God who is ever awake does hear.[229] Tamburlaine draws the same conclusions about

---

224. See ibid.

225. See ibid. See also below, pp. 321 ff.

226. See below, pp. 321 ff.

227. Idols are noted for their deafness. The Bible says: "And yf one crye vnto hym, he geueth no answeare, and deliuereth not the man that calleth vpon hym from his trouble": B.V., Isa. 46:7. See also Deut. 4:28. "Benefits and plagues are in Gods only hande, wherein the false goddes can do nothing": B.V., Exod. 8:22, n (n).

228. "Beholde he that kepeth Israel, wil nether slumber nor slepe": G.V., Ps. 121:4. Many times God is said to have heard prayers: see Gen. 21:17; 2 Sam. 22:7; etc. Or, he is begged to hear them: see 2 Kgs. 19:16; Neh. 1:6; etc. See also below, p. 337 and n. 323.

229. The Biblical God does hear: "His eares are open unto their cry": Ps. 34:15.
(continued overleaf.....)

Mahomet when he challenges him to save his Koran from the flames. "He cannot heare the voice of Tamburlaine" (2T 5.1.198), says the hero: Mahomet is a deaf and a dead god.

Marlowe goes to some trouble to emphasize the utter helplessness of Mahomet. Zabina begs Mahomet that he ask God to strike Tamburlaine and his men dead that Bajazet may triumph over the Scythian (1T 3.3.195-197). Her pleas remain unanswered and Bajazet suffers a crushing defeat. As explained above,[230] Bajazet probably felt entitled to special protection and interest on the part of Mahomet as his representative and kinsman on earth. Theridamas perhaps interprets this general expectancy of all present that Mahomet will help the Turkish king and queen when he asks Techelles if he thinks Mahomet will let them humiliate Bajazet as they are doing (1T 4.4.52). As may be expected, Mahomet does nothing to relieve or save Bajazet. Mahomet himself has to suffer the sight of the humiliated Bajazet; Techelles voices this awareness when he answers, "He cannot let it" (1T 4.4.53).[231] In the same way that the Biblical idol Baal did nothing to save his priests,[232] so Mahomet does not intervene to save his.[233] One can sense, as Bajazet

---

229. Continued ..... "Behold, the Lordes hand is not so shortened ... neyther is his eare so stopped that it may not heare": B.V., Isa. 59:1. The Lord promises the following: "And call vpon me in the daie of trouble so wil I deliuer thee": G.V., Ps. 50:15. See also Neh. 9:27; Ps. 17:1; Isa. 37:17; etc.

230. See above, pp. 267-268.

231. Cf. the power of the Biblical God: "I doo the woorke, and who shal be able to let it?": B.V., Isa. 43:13.

232. See below, pp. 321 ff.

233. "That which can not deliuer others nor saue it selfe, is no god, but an idol": B.V., 2 Chr. 25:15, n. (c). See also 2 Chr. 32:15. "Then shal the townes of Juda ... cal vpon their goddes ... but they shal not be able to helpe them in tyme of their trouble": B.V., Jer. 11:12. "They can saue no man from death, nether deliuer the weake from the mightie": G.V., Baruch 6:35. By contrast, "the true God of Israel is not like to these idoles: for he can helpe when all things are desperate": G.V., Jer. 51:19, n. (m). "He proueth that whatsoeuer can not saue him selfe, nor his worshipers, is no God but an idole": G.V., 2 Chr. 25:15, n. (m).

and Zabina are meant to feel, the utter futility of appealing to Mahomet for help when Tamburlaine tells them to pray for him and his soldiers as they go to destroy Damascus (1T 5.1.213). Nothing can stop Tamburlaine; his spiritual mission and resources spring from sources other than the power of Mahomet. The total inertia of Mahomet leads Zabina to despair; she loses all interest in life: "Why live we Bajazeth?" (1T 5.1.249).[234] The only way to end these ills is not to expect help from their god Mahomet but to kill themselves. Thus, Mahomet, the friend of God, has been totally inefficient in the first part of Tamburlaine: not even the Soldan has he saved from Tamburlaine's power. He has remained indifferent to his followers no matter how urgent may have been their need for assistance. Mahomet has acted in a manner typical of the idols of the Bible; they cannot see nor hear those begging for their help. The utter weakness of Mahomet, the helplessness of this idol is made all the more real when contrasted with the God of the

---

234. The whole passage is as follows:

> Why live we Bajazeth, and build up neasts,
> So high within the region of the aire,
> By living long in this oppression,
> That all the world will see and laugh to scorne,
> The former triumphes of our mightines,
> In this obscure infernall servitude?
> (1T 5.1.249-254).

The image of pride and ambition in terms of "building nests so high" appears in the Bible in connection with the idolatrous Edom which will be brought down: "Neuerthelesse, though thy nest were as hygh as the Egles, yet I wyl cast thee downe, sayth the Lorde": B.V., Jer. 49:16. Elsewhere on the same subject, we find: "Yea, though thou exalt thy self as the egle, and make thy nest among the starres, thence wil I bring thee downe, saith the Lord": B.V., Obad. 4. For other examples of this image, see Job 39:27; Hab. 2:9; Psa. 104: 16-17; Ezek. 31:6. Was Marlowe conscious of this Biblical image when he used it in his text? The downfall of Bajazeth and Zabina will be remembered by the world in the same way that the downfall of the idolatrous brought about by God will be, as "an example for other, yea and a common by woord ...": B.V. Ezek. 14:8.

Bible who sees and hears,[235] who repeatedly reassures his people by telling them he will answer them when they call on him[236] and that he will come to the rescue of his people.[237] Such is not the case with Mahomet the idol.

While in the first part of the play, the attention of the reader or of the audience is directed towards the antagonism which gradually builds up between Tamburlaine and Bajazet, Mahomet's representative on earth, until the Turk is annihilated, in the second part of Tamburlaine, the emphasis is laid on the antagonism between Tamburlaine and Mahomet. Although this antagonism has already been initiated in the first part of the play, it now increases in intensity until it comes to a head in the scene of the burning of the Koran. The evidence of the mounting antagonism is not too prominent but there are some instances in Tamburlaine's career which become more meaningful if they are understood in a Moslem context, especially in one of mounting rivalry between Tamburlaine and Mahomet. One of these instances occurs after the death of Zenocrate. Tamburlaine expresses anxiety over the fate of Zenocrate, an anxiety which arises from the possibility that he may now have a rival claiming Zenocrate's affection. Tamburlaine is seized by pangs of jealously of a deadly nature like those he had already experienced at the sight of Agydas and Zenocrate conversing together (1T 3.2.). He imagines Zenocrate in the arms of some god. The thought, "What God so ever holds thee in his armes, / Giving thee Nectar and Ambrosia ..." (2T 2.4.109-110), serving her the wine and the food of the gods, drives Tamburlaine into a new surge of violence and belligerence. These lines come as a climax to Zeno-

---

235. See above, p. 308 and notes 228, 229.

236. See above, p. 308 and n. 229.

237. See ibid.

crate's illness and death. Tamburlaine has interpreted Zenocrate's ill health as the deed of jealous gods. During her illness, as Tamburlaine explains, the music of the heavens is inviting Zenocrate for,

> ... in this sweet and curious harmony,
> The God that tunes this musicke to our soules,
> Holds out his hand in highest majesty
> To entertaine divine Zenocrate.
>
> (2T 2.4.31-34)

Tamburlaine interprets her death in the same way. "Amorous Jove hath snatcht my love from hence, / Meaning to make her stately Queene of heaven" (2T 2.4. 107-108). Tamburlaine suspects all the gods of being jealous of his love (2T 2.4.31-33, 85). His anxiety over the identity of the god now in possession of Zenocrate provokes him into a new spate of warfare. He aims, curiously enough, at recapturing the love of Zenocrate by war as his talk of warfare had won her heart when he first met her. He reminds her, "Behold me here, divine Zenocrate" (2T 2.4.111) as he hopes to stir her pity for him, and laments: "And if thou pitiest Tamburlain the great, / Come downe from heaven and live with me againe" (2T 2.4. 117-118). Tamburlaine's anxiety, if read in a Moslem frame of mind and as it was probably understood by Marlowe and his contemporaries, may have been more meaningful than it would appear to be on the surface.

There is reason to suppose that Marlowe knew about the Moslem heaven as well as he knew of the Moslem hell with its "fruit of bytternesse" (2T 2.3. 20) from "the banefull tree of hell" (2T 2.3.19) the Zoacum (2T 2.3.20) Lonicerus had provided the information on the hell of the Islamic faith[238] which Marlowe uses in his play. Marlowe seems to have derived from the same source some notions about the heaven of the Moslems. He borrows from Loni-

---

238. See above, pp. 297, n. 187.

cerus the idea of the crystal springs of immortality that "like tried silver runs through Paradice" (2T 2.4.24).[239] He could also have drawn from the same author the ideas that

> The Cherubins and holy Seraphins
> That sing and play before the king of kings,
> Use all their voices and their instruments,[240]
> (2T 2.4.26-28)

in this case, for the pleasure of Zenocrate. Did the playwright's knowledge of the Moslem paradise stop there? Tamburlaine's awareness that Zenocrate might be in the arms of some god might reflect other aspects of the paradise of the Moslems.

It was generally understood that the paradise of the Islamic faith was exclusively a place of carnal and sensual pleasure.[241] According to

---

239. Marlowe's text is as follows:

> The christall springs whose taste illuminates
> Refined eies with an eternall light,
> Like tried silver runs through Paradice.
> (2T 2.4.22-24)

In Lonicerus, we find the following: "tum etiam aquas Christallinas, ex quarum gustu eum oculorum splendorem percepturi sint, vt eorum radij a polo ad polum extendantur": see op. cit., n. 109, Tomvs I, fol. 64. Marlowe has shifted the extent of the illumination of the sight from a spatial to an eternal dimension. He may also have borrowed his simile "like tried silver" from the Bible: see Ps. 12:6; 66:10; B.V., Prov. 17:3; etc. Thus, he would be combining Moslem and Biblical elements. The Book of Revelation mentions "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God": Rev. 22:1.

240. Lonicerus says that in heaven, "hinc Cherubin, inde Seraphin, quorum nonnulli instrumentis musicis sint lusuri, quidam vero hymnos palmosque cantaturi. (...) Haec sibi Paradisi gaudia Mahometistae somniant, in quibus in aeternum hymnis psalmisque Devm sint laudaturi. ...": see op. cit., n. 109, Tomvs I, fol. 64. Marlowe has christianized the text somewhat; he makes the angels sing "before the king of kings", a term generally understood to mean Christ, according to Christian tradition, instead of before God as in the original text. For examples of Christ identified as "the King of kings", see 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16. One must add, however, that a heaven filled with angels singing and playing musical instruments was a part of the tradition of Christian art: see Emile Mâle, L'Art religieux de la fin du Moyen Age en France (Paris, 1949), pp. 477-478.

241. See Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 109, Tomvs I, fol 64. See also E.M. Wherry, A Comprehensive Commentary on the Qur'an: ... (London, 1882), vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, pp 161-162 and 299, n. See also ibid., vol. 2, p. 8, n. and p. 62, n. See Chew, op. cit., n. 3, p. 410. See also below, p. 314 and n. 243.

most Islamic scholars, no where and at no time is the happiness of the inmates of that paradise explained in terms of bliss arising from the union of the soul with its Creator or from the Beatific Vision.[242] Moslem warriors who died on the battlefield fighting for their one God Allah, the core of the Islamic faith, were promised the company of ever youthful dark-eyed beauties, the houris of heaven.[243] Probably, as an incentive to the wives of these warriors to live an honest life in this world, women who had been loyal and good wives, while they could never hope to accede to the ranks of the houris, nevertheless, could aspire to have their youth and beauty restored to them,[244] once they should reach heaven, and be chosen again to be the happy companions of some worthy warrior in paradise.[245] Tamburlaine's praises of Zenocrate's beauty abound in the play.[246] He also, at one point, testifies to Zenocrate's unflinching loyalty to him when he alludes to his three sons whom he has difficulty in recognizing as such for their lack of promise as warriors. They rather, he says,

> Would make me thinke them Bastards, not my sons,
> But that I know they issued from thy wombe,
> That never look'd on man but Tamburlaine.
> (2T 1.3.32-34)

---

242. Wherry says: "We strain our eyes in vain to catch a glimpse of a spiritual heaven anywhere in the Qur'an": see op. cit., n. 241, vol. 1, p. 299 n.

243. See Guillaume, op. cit., n. 40, p. 112; Wherry, op. cit., n. 241, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, pp. 153 ff. and 163. See also Maxime Rodinson, Mohammed, translated from the French edition Mahomet (1961) by Anne Carter (Penguin Books, 1976 reprinted ed.), pp. 87 and 244; Guillaume, op. cit., n. 114, p. 60. All Moslems dying in the grace of God, according to Moslem standards, were to be provided with countless slaves in paradise: see Michialle Mufti, Religion ou Theologie des Turcs (Bruxelles, 1707), Première Partie, p. 196. These were perpetually young maidens called "houris": see Pétis de la Croix, L'Histoire du Timur-Bec connu sous le nom du gran Tamerlan, empereur des Mogols et Tartares (Paris, 1722), vol. 4, p. 221, n. "Houris" are mentioned in the Koran: see ed. cit., n. 187, p. 66, sura 56:22. See also ibid., p. 52, sura 78:33; p. 64, sura 52:20 ff.; p. 75, sura 55:56; etc.

244. See Lonicerus, op. cit., n. 109, Tomvs I, fol. 64. See also Wherry, op. cit., n. 241, vol. 1, Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 163.

245. According to Guillaume, the presence of the houris seems to annul this possibility: see op. cit., n. 40, p. 125, n. 1.

246. 1T 1.2.87-89; 3.3.117-121; 5.1.135 ff.

Zenocrate's faithful devotion to Tamburlaine is thus attested to in no uncertain terms.

Because Tamburlaine's "paragon" (1T 3.3.119) of beauty and virtue may hope for the best in paradise, because there are clear allusions to Mahomet as a god in the play, because there is evidence of a growing rivalry between Tamburlaine and Mahomet especially in the second part of the play, and because this rivalry reaches a climax in a scene which metes out a treatment to Mahomet of the kind which is supposedly well-deserved by gods or idols, one wonders whether the hidden meaning of the expression "What God ..." may not imply Tamburlaine's fear that this god might be Mahomet and that Zenocrate might now be in the arms of Mahomet,[247] for she is worth the attentions of no one less than a god as Tamburlaine would readily affirm. Although this interpretation might appear remotely relevant, one must not rule out altogether the possibility that some Elizabethans, knowledgeable in the theories about the Moslem paradise, might have read such a meaning in Tamburlaine's words. It is interesting to note that Tamburlaine tries to assuage his distress at the thought by a renewed vigour in warfare, for the "raving impatient, desperate and mad" (2T 2.4.112) Tamburlaine resolves to have "death and tyrannising war" (2T 2.4.115) march with him under his bloody flag in an effort to stir Zenocrate's pity for him. When one remembers how zeal on the battlefield was the gateway to heaven for the Moslem warrior[248] and how Mahomet's greatness had resided partly in his courage and expertise on the battlefield while waging his holy wars,[249] one wonders

---

247. If this was Marlowe's thought, he must be commended for his discreet manner of evoking the panorama of a Moslem paradise. He may wish, in this way, to avoid introducing associations with his hero which would be unpleasant, even unacceptable to a Christian audience which was monogamous.

248. Mahomet assured his followers that "le Paradis même était à l'ombre de l'épée ...": see Pétis, op. cit., n. 243, vol. 2, p. 135. Pétis also notes that those who were killed during a war for the faith went straight to paradise and were called martyrs: see ibid., vol. 3, p. 5, n. Elsewhere he says, "Les Mahométans croyent comme article de foi, que ceux d'entr'eux qui sont tués dans une guerre contre les Peuples d'une autre Religion que la leur sont Martyrs": see ibid., vol. 1, p. 383. See also Hilda Hookham, Tamburlaine the Conqueror (London, 1962), pp. 79 and 188-189.

249. See above, pp. 158-159.

if Tamburlaine may not be trying to outdo Mahomet on these grounds. This would be the only means possible for a Moslem to promote his spiritual prestige and to become a fear-inspiring rival to Mahomet. Scholars agree that Tamburlaine enters upon a new phase of warfare at this point, a phase which touches upon insanity by its violence and cruelty. Elsewhere in the play, Marlowe takes pains that Tamburlaine be assessed as "a man greater than Mahomet" (2T 3.4.46). If he wishes to win the heart of Zenocrate again, he must become a god greater than Mahomet. This can possibly be best proved by directly challenging Mahomet to prove his worth. However, before this takes place, Tamburlaine and Mahomet come to odds with each other in another incident.

If Tamburlaine's renewed dedication to warfare is meant to emulate Mahomet in the hope of bringing back Zenocrate, he is soon confronted with a serious setback when he discovers Calyphas's defection from the battle scene. Instead of winning the admiration of all, gods and men, by his integrity as a dedicated warrior, Tamburlaine has to reckon with a serious flaw in his son's integrity as a soldier, an awareness which amounts to discovering this flaw in himself. Tamburlaine's anger flies immediately in the direction of Jove and Mahomet. A deadly enmity develops between Jove and his friend Mahomet on the one part and Tamburlaine who desperately tries to soothe the bitter shame of having so cowardly a son. There is evidence to show that Tamburlaine enters upon a new stage in his warfare, possibly in an effort to restore his personal integrity as a fully committed warrior, as Jerusalem, a Turkish king, warns him: "Thy victories are growne so violent" (2T 4.1.140) that shortly heaven will take its revenge (2T 4.1.141 ff.). Tamburlaine's warfare expands in scope and violence. Is he about to become engaged in the greatest of holy wars?

As was said before, the rivalry between Tamburlaine and Mahomet comes to a head in the scene of the burning of the Koran. This scene has all sorts of undertones, mostly provided by the Biblical connotations attached to it. One can readily estimate that this scene is a great dramatic moment in the play. If Tamburlaine's climb to power and prestige is to be sketched against

the growing importance and status of the enemies he defeats, then one might judge that the challenge that Tamburlaine puts to Mahomet is the greatest in the ten acts of Tamburlaine. If Tamburlaine's main purpose as a warrior is to strike at the heart of Islam, then again this is the great moment of Tamburlaine. After successfully annihilating Mahomet's representative in the person of Bajazet, Tamburlaine has struck another deadly blow against the Moslem military machine by defeating its great generals, Orcanes and his colleagues.[250] After having destroyed the military strength of Islam, there remains to strike at the source of its spiritual power, the core of Islam, the Alcoran, the sum of Mahomet's message. For these reasons, Tamburlaine's confrontation with Mahomet could be, if not a dramatic climax, nevertheless, the supreme event of the play. If the theory that the theme of idolatry plays an important role in Tamburlaine is accepted, then, there is a third reason to qualify this scene as climactic in Tamburlaine's career as a scourge. The burning of the Moslem revelation symbolizes a supreme and final blow to the plague of Islam at least in the make-believe world of the stage. It possibly symbolizes as well the climax of Tamburlaine's spiritual growth as a warrior. With the defeat of Mahomet, Tamburlaine is at the top of the religious scale, as a worthy warrior by Islamic standards of warfare, as a scourge by Christian standards of values and possibly as a god by comparison to Mahomet. How does Marlowe make this scene an effective and powerful moment in the play?

First, it must be pointed out that this scene is completely of Marlowe's invention. There is material neither in the history of Timur nor in the chronicles telling of Tamburlaine's career that, even remotely, suggests this scene in any way. Neither are there any elements in Knolles's Historie, an account which for mysterious reasons displays affinities with Marlowe's

---

250. This defeat takes place between 2T 3.5 and 2T 4.1.76.

way of thinking and of expressing himself, which could slightly suggest a total rejection of Islam on the part of Tamburlaine as this scene conveys. One may suggest that this episode springs from a Christian context primarily. It dramatizes the secret hopes of Christendom, of destroying the idolatrous plague which constantly threatens the Christians; for this reason, therefore, this incident would appeal to any audience in Christian countries. Whatever Marlowe meant to achieve by it, it would seem that the episode holds a key position in the second part of Tamburlaine. The message it conveys supposedly reflects the way of thinking of Marlowe's contemporaries and the attitudes of the Elizabethans towards anything related with Islam.

The scene is clearly a challenge on the part of Tamburlaine against Mahomet and his book both perceived as idols. For Tamburlaine admits he had thought Mahomet to be a god (2T 5.1.175) and there was a tradition of the Koran being thought of as an idol. Within a Moslem context, Tamburlaine's deed is blasphemous. Marlowe undoubtedly knew the reverence and respect any Moslem would have had for the Koranic writ itself and the extent to which they made it the object of their veneration.[251] In the world of Islam, it would have been an unheard-of deed to burn the Koran openly and publicly. Marlowe certainly had specific aims in creating this scene; possibly one of them was to shatter this myth of divinity which was attached to both the book and its author. Perhaps, by this means, Marlowe was hoping to free Tamburlaine completely from any spiritual indebtedness or link with the Koranic teaching of Mahomet. He meant the audience to understand that the boundless resources which Tamburlaine enjoyed in the fulfilment of his role as a Scourge of God had their sources elsewhere. If Marlowe constructed an episode in which the source of the Moslem strength in warfare was so obviously and radically

---

251. See above, p. 205 and n. 291.

destroyed, then the audience was forced to conclude that other agents were responsible for the spiritual status and mission of Tamburlaine as the Scourge of God.

If the insertion of this episode in the life of Tamburlaine was an invention of Marlowe's, the materials used in the construction of the scene were not necessarily so. The dramatist could have drawn from a literary tradition which had gradually developed around the theme of Mahomet the idol as well as that of the Alcoran as a god. This tradition had been inspired by Biblical incidents involved with the problem of idolatry in the history of Israel.

To begin with, the Alcoran, for reasons which have already been explained,[252] had been recognized and worshipped as a god long before the days of Marlowe. The dramatist was probably familiar with elements of this tradition which had arisen during the Middle Ages and had travelled down through the years to the days of the Renaissance revival in literature. Chew mentions the medieval pantheon of gods which had made its way down the centuries.[253] Mahomet and the Alcoran were of the number of deities making up its galaxy,[254] for, with the years, the Koran as a book had been "transmuted into a god[255] under the name of Alcaron[256] instead of Alcoran, the form generally used at this time for the words "Qur'an" or "Koran". It is interesting to note that, according to Fredson Bowers, whose aim was to present Marlowe's plays and poems in

---

252. See above, pp. 319-320 and p. 319, n. 255.

253. See op. cit., n. 3, p. 389.

254. The others were Apollin, Termagant, Jubiter, Jovin, Ascarot: see ibid.

255. Chew notes that "Alcaron seems to be Alkoran, the Koran, the book transmuted into a god": op. cit., n. 3, p. 389, n. 1.

256. See ibid.

> as close a form to the original inscription as can be recovered from the printed editions both in respect to the texture of spelling, punctuation, capitalization and word-division and in respect to the words that Marlowe wrote,[257]

the dramatist consistently used the form "Alcaron" in his text. This form used in this scene is traced back to the first four editions of the play.[258] It would thus appear that Marlowe deliberately chose the form "Alcaron" instead of "Alcoran" to designate the book recognized as an idol, and that modern editors have wrongly emended the word to "Alcoran".[259] To Marlowe and his audience, the word "Alcaron" was probably meant to include the idea of the book Koran and that of diety attached to the book. It is not at all impossible that the word evoked groups of idols like Jubiter, Jovin, Apollin, Ascarot with which Alcaron was associated.[260] Thus Tamburlaine's burning

---

257. Fredson Bowers, ed., The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe (Cambridge, 1973), vol. 1, p. vii.

258. The four editions are Q_1 (1590), Q_2 (1593), Q_3 (1597), Q_4 (1605, 1606), the second date of Q_4 being that of the edition of the second part of the play: see Bowers, ed. cit., n. 257, p. 239. Bowers notes that the spelling "Alcaron" in 2T 5.1.192 is found in the first four editions of Tamburlaine: see ibid., p. 237.

259. The word "Alcoran" appears in 1T 3.3.76; 2T 1.1.138; 5.1.172, 192. The spelling of the word has been emended to "Alcoran" in the following editions: Alexander Dyce, ed., The Works of Christopher Marlowe (London, 1859); Jump, ed.cit., n.79; J.W. Harper, Tamburlaine (London, 1971); Irving Ribner, ed., Christopher Marlowe's 'Tamburlaine: Part One and Part Two': Text and Major Criticism (New York, 1974). On the other hand, the following editions have preserved the form "Alcaron": see C.F. Tucker Brooke, ed., The Works of Christopher Marlowe (Oxford, 1910); Ellis-Fermor, ed. cit. n. 5. The "Alcaron" spelling may be only a variant introduced by the sixteenth-century compositor of the printed editions of Tamburlaine but it is interesting to note that Brooke and Bowers should have preserved so significant a spelling.

260. See above, p. 319 and n. 254.

of the Alcaron amounted to the burning of an idol as many Israelite reformers had done on various occasions throughout their history.[261]

In this scene, Tamburlaine obviously is putting Mahomet to the test. The episode bears several resemblances to that of Elijah and the priests of Baal, as it is told in the first Book of Kings.[262] Briefly, the Biblical story runs as follows. Elijah, displeased about the interest Ahab, the Jewish king, was displaying in idols, summoned him to gather his people and prophets together at Mount Carmel. Elijah met these people and reprimanded them in the following words: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him".[263] Elijah then outlined the procedure to be followed by which the power of God and that of the gods would be tested and compared. The prophets or the priests of Baal and himself were each to slay a bullock, cut it in pieces, lay it on wood, and then call on the name of Baal or the gods in the case of the priests of Baal, and on the name of God in the case of Elijah. The one who would answer by fire, then let him be God.[264] The plan was accepted by the people and the priests of Baal were chosen to test the power of their god first. The story goes on to say how, once the victim was prepared, the priests or prophets "called on the name of Baal, from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal,

---

261. For the practice of burning gods either as a fact or as a law to be observed, see Exod. 32:20; Deut. 7:5, 25; 9:21, 12:3; 2 Sam. 5:21; 1 Kgs. 15:13; 2 Kgs. 10:26; 23:6; 15; 2 Chr. 15:16; Jer. 43:12, 13; etc. So did the practice appear in metrical romances: see Chew, op. cit., n. 3, pp. 391-392.

262. See 1 Kgs. 18:17-40.

263. 1 Kgs. 18:21.

264. According to Wherry, the Jews insisted that it was the special proof of the mission of the prophet that he could, by his prayers, bring down fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice. God had appointed this miracle as the test of all prophets: see op. cit., n. 241, vol. 2, p. 56, n.

hear us".[265] But there was no answer. The Biblical text then runs as follows: "And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud; for he is a god. Either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or [and here is the key phrase and the source of inspiration for all the theories about "sleepy idols"][266] peradventure, he sleepeth, and must be awakened".[267] The priests cried aloud, cut themselves with lances till the blood gushed out upon them.[268] By evening, the priests of Baal still had no answer. Elijah then proceeded to carry out his part of the plan. He had the bullock, the wood, the altar prepared, after which he ordered that four barrels of water be poured three times on the victims.[269] Then Elijah came near the altar and begged the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel to make himself known as the God of Israel. "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again".[270] The Biblical text goes on to say, "Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench".[271] The people then believed in the Lord and the prophets of Baal were slain for being idolaters. The Biblical account tells how Elijah caused rain to fall and performed other marvellous deeds.[272]

---

265. 1 Kgs. 18:26.

266. See above, pp. 307-308 and p. 308, n. 228.

267. 1 Kgs. 18:27.

268. This episode of Baal's priests and this particular practice evidently caught the imagination of more than one preacher in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. See above, p.274, n. 121. Familiarity with this incident made the allusion to Mahomet's priests cutting themselves all the more eloquent.

269. See 1 Kgs. 18:33 - 34.

270. 1 Kgs. 18:37.

271. 1 Kgs. 18:38.

272. See 1 Kgs. 18:41-46.

This Biblical tale was the standard story of the ways God would use in order to prove his power against that of the gods. As may be expected, this story, with various alterations, had become a favourite theme in the literature of the Middle Ages down through to the sixteenth century and later. Marlowe could have known the story from Holy Scripture as well as from medieval or contemporary works available at his time.

As was mentioned before,[273] the theme of Mahomet the idol had found its way in medieval plays, romances, and Renaissance drama. There were many legends about gods, in some cases about the idols of Egypt called "Mahomets" or "Maumets" [274] which fell down at the coming of Christ.[275] Just before the crucifixion one of the executioners was supposed to have declared that not all Christ's "mawmentry" could save him.[276] Elsewhere, again in Egypt, when people had offered sacrifices to their "Maumet", all of these devils or idols had fallen to the ground,[277] a sign of their defeat. Another story which has already been alluded to, is told about a King and Queen of Marseilles going to a temple on whose altar is an idol of Mahond. They attend a service conducted by a pagan priest and his acolyte. Liturgy, offerings, veneration of relics of the god; all are part of the service. The story ends with a cloud of heaven setting the temple on fire while the priest and his assistant

---

273. See above, pp. 272 ff.; pp. 304-305 and p. 304, n. 203.

274. See Chew, op. cit., n. 3, pp. 390-391.

275. See ibid.

276. See ibid., p. 391.

277. See ibid., p. 391, n. 1.

are swallowed up by the earth; the King and Queen are converted.[278] Chew sees in this story the influence of the contest between Aaron and the Egyptian wizards[279] as well as the story of Elijah and the priests of Baal which was related above. The theme of Mahomet the idol also appears in metrical romances as was mentioned above.[280] The principal idea, which emerges from these works, is mostly that of a sleepy Mahomet unable to defend himself against those who seek to destroy him; his helplessness leads those who witness such scenes to a conversion to him who died on the Cross.[281] Marlowe includes several notions from the Biblical account as well as from literary works which were based on themes found in Biblical episodes.

As was mentioned before,[282] the scene of the burning of the Koran is important in that it seems most relevant to the meaning of the play as a whole. It provides an overall perspective to the action and offers some elements of coherence to the dramatic plot itself. It reflects Marlowe's problem of trying to make a Moslem hero acceptable to a Christian audience, and of drawing Tamburlaine closer to the religious allegiance of a Christian. The core and the climax of Tamburlaine's career as a warring scourge lie in his rejection of Mahomet as an idol, on the transfer of his allegiance from the supposed deity of Mahomet to that of an only God, a God who strongly evokes the Biblical God as well as that of the Moslems. The importance of this episode seems to make it worth-while to analyse in some detail

---

278. See ibid., p. 391.

279. See ibid., p. 391 and n. 4. See also Exod. 7:8 ff., and above, pp. 321 ff. and notes.

280. See above, pp. 304-305.

281. See Chew, op. cit., n. 3, pp. 391 ff.

282. See above, pp. 316 ff.

the various aspects of this scene.

Marlowe makes of this incident a case of idolatry being confronted or challenged by orthodoxy, or vice versa. The dramatist goes to lengths to present Mahomet as an idol and to minimize the worth of "the Abstracts of his foolish lawes" (2T 5.1.196) as much as he can. The moral worth of the "Alcaron", the sum of Mahomet's religion (2T 5.1.19), is indirectly assessed by the fate it shares with "all the heapes of superstitious bookes / Found in the Temples of that Mahomet, / Whom I have thought a God" (2T 5.1.173-175). Marlowe destroys the myth of Mahomet as a deity. If Mahomet is not an idol, then he is just a man. The god Alcaron thus becomes a man-made idol, worthy of the flames as so many man-made idols of the Bible were.[283] The burning of the book itself is a doubly eloquent incident for its significance in a Biblical as well as in an Elizabethan context. Biblical texts attach a symbolic meaning to the burning of books.[284] This act implies a rejection of their content and, therefore, a conversion of heart. At times, it is simply a necessary part of the eradication of idolatry. Marlowe implies both of these aspects in the burning of the Koran by Tamburlaine. It would seem, moreover, that these "heapes of superstitious bookes" would undoubtedly recall

---

283. "Whatsoeuer is made by the hand of man, if it be estemed as God, is moste detestable": G.V., Isa. 44:10, n. (o). See also G.V, Isa. 41:24, n. (s); Isa. 41:29, etc.

284. For the burning of Jeremiah's scrolls by Jehudi as a symbol of the rejection of their content, see Jer. 36:23. For the burning of the books of the law of God, see 1 Macc. 1:59. The B.V. adds that "it is a manifest note of the enimies of God to burne the bookes of the lawe": 1 Macc. 1:59, n. (1). Luke relates how books of magic were burnt before all the assembly as a sign of the renudiation of its contents: see Acts 19:19. Faustus, in a moment of terror and despair, tries to save himself from hell by resolving to burn his books: see DF., 1982.

similar occasions in the religious[285] and in the academic [286] history of England when inmates of colleges and public officials gathered in quadrangles or public squares to preside over this type of activity. There were probably many an Elizabethan who had been a witness to such incidents or who knew of instances when heaps of books had been burnt because their content was no longer considered orthodox or compatible with the new ways of thinking especially when doctrinal differences were the issue. Many were the books which had been arbitrarily categorized as "superstitious" and thrown into flames for that reason. Did Marlowe have this in mind when he planned this scene?

Be that as it may, superstition was easily related to idolatry. Marlowe introduces in this same passage (2T 5.1.173-175) on the lips of Tamburlaine, the ideas of "temples", "Mahomet", and "god". This sort of association was again of Marlowe's invention, although it may have been inspired by Biblical episodes or by contemporary literature concerned with idolatrous practices. For it must be pointed out that these associations did not stem from the tenets of orthodox Islam. Moslem temples or mosques were not used to venerate the god Mahomet but the one God Allah. However, "temples", "god", and the priests of Mahomet mentioned on two different occasions[287] could not but recall several Biblical episodes connected with the eradication of idolatry. The

---

285. MacLure notes that heretical and seditious books were burnt at Paul's Cross from time to time: see op. cit., n. 22, pp. 17-18. The same author tells of burning bulls from the Pope as a symbol equivalent to burning the Pope, of burning Tyndale's New Testament, Lutheran books, etc., in 1521, again in 1530: see ibid., pp. 22-23; of a great bonfire of heretical books in 1546: see ibid., p. 38. See also James B. Mullinger, The University of Cambridge from the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535 (Cambridge, 1873), vol. 1, pp. 570 ff., 600.

286. MacLure mentions libraries being plundered by iconoclasts at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries: see op. cit., n. 22, p. 131.

287. See 1T 4.2.2.; 2T 5.1.180.

breaking down of idols and altars in temples,[288] the slaying of priests[289] as Tamburlaine boasts he has done (2T 5.1.180), and sometimes the burning of books[290] found in the temples were all parts of the traditional scenarios which illustrated the fight against idolatry. Connotations of idolatry are accumulated in this scene if the link is made with the fact that Tamburlaine stages his episode in Babylon, a city notoriously known for the multiplicity of its temples, priests, and idols.[291] Furthermore, the whole scene unfolds between the disillusionment Tamburlaine experiences at the beginning of the scene when he decides he must reject Mahomet whom he had thought a God (2T 5.1.175) and the realization that he must "seeke out another Godhead to adore" (2T 5.1.199). Thus the episode is enclosed between two statements which imply the rejection of idolatry and its practices.

One wonders what sort of resonance the word "Godhead" might have had for Marlowe's audience.[292] This word was opposed to notions of idolatry in

---

288. For express orders to do so, see Exod. 23:24; 34:13; Deut. 7:5. For instances when altars and idols were dealt with in this manner, see 2 Kgs. 11:18; 18:4; 23:14; 2 Chr. 14:3; 23:17; 31:1; 34:4; Isa. 21:9. For plans to do so, see Jer. 43:13; etc.

289. For a prophecy to that effect, see 1 Kgs. 13:2. For instances when idolatrous priests were slain, see 2 Kgs. 11:18; 23:20; 2 Chr. 23:17; etc.

290. See above, pp. 325-326; p. 325, notes 284, 285. Fulke Greville sees the burning of books, "fair monuments of mind", as part of the works of war: see Alexander B. Grosart, ed., The Works in Verse and Prose Complete of Right Honourable Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke (London, 1870) vol. 2, "A Treatie of Warres", pp. 103 ff., stanza 10.

291. See Isa. 21:9; 48:5; Jer. 25:6; 50:2, 38; 51:17, 47, 52; etc.

292. The word often appears in homiletic literature. The Nestorian heresy had sensitized the Christian world to the theories about the double nature of Christ, of his Godhead or divinity combined with his manhood; see Robert Abbot, op. cit., n. 20, p. 83. "The godhead in the man Iesus Christ ruleth and governeth all things": ibid., op. cit., n. 17, p. 10. See George Abbot, op. cit., n. 20, pp. 107 and 377.

breaking down of idols and altars in temples,[288] the slaying of priests[289] as Tamburlaine boasts he has done (2T. 5.1.180), and sometimes the burning of books[290] found in the temples were all parts of the traditional scenarios which illustrated the fight against idolatry. Connotations of idolatry are accumulated in this scene if the link is made with the fact that Tamburlaine stages his episode in Babylon, a city notoriously known for the multiplicity of its temples, priests, and idols.[291] Furthermore, the whole scene unfolds between the disillusionment Tamburlaine experiences at the beginning of the scene when he decides he must reject Mahomet whom he had thought a God (2T. 5.1.175) and the realization that he must "seeke out another Godhead to adore" (2T. 5.1.199). Thus the episode is enclosed between two statements which imply the rejection of idolatry and its practices.

One wonders what sort of resonance the word "Godhead" might have had for Marlowe's audience.[292] This word was opposed to notions of idolatry in

---

288. For express orders to do so, see Exod. 23:24; 34:13; Deut. 7:5. For instances when altars and idols were dealt with in this manner, see 2 Kgs. 11:18; 18:4; 23:14; 2 Chr. 14:3; 23:17; 31:1; 34:4; Isa. 21:9. For plans to do so, see Jer. 43:13; etc.

289. For a prophecy to that effect, see 1 Kgs. 13:2. For instances when idolatrous priests were slain, see 2 Kgs. 11:18; 23:20; 2 Chr. 23:17; etc.

290. See above, pp. 325-326; p. 325, notes 284, 285. Fulke Greville sees the burning of books, "fair monuments of mind", as part of the works of war: see Alexander B. Grosart, ed., The Works in Verse and Prose Complete of Right Honourable Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke (London, 1870) vol. 2, "A Treatie of Warres", pp. 103 ff., stanza 10.

291. See Isa. 21:9; 48:5; Jer. 25:6; 50:2, 38; 51:17, 47, 52; etc.

292. The word often appears in homiletic literature. The Nestorian heresy had sensitized the Christian world to the theories about the double nature of Christ, of his Godhead or divinity combined with his manhood; see Robert Abbot, op. cit., n. 20, p. 83. "The godhead in the man Iesus Christ ruleth and governeth all things": ibid., op. cit., n. 17, p. 10. See George Abbot, op. cit., n. 20, pp. 107 and 377.

breaking down of idols and altars in temples,[288] the slaying of priests[289] as Tamburlaine boasts he has done (2T. 5.1.180), and sometimes the burning of books[290] found in the temples were all parts of the traditional scenarios which illustrated the fight against idolatry. Connotations of idolatry are accumulated in this scene if the link is made with the fact that Tamburlaine stages his episode in Babylon, a city notoriously known for the multiplicity of its temples, priests, and idols.[291] Furthermore, the whole scene unfolds between the disillusionment Tamburlaine experiences at the beginning of the scene when he decides he must reject Mahomet whom he had thought a God (2T. 5.1.175) and the realization that he must "seeke out another Godhead to adore" (2T. 5.1.199). Thus the episode is enclosed between two statements which imply the rejection of idolatry and its practices.

One wonders what sort of resonance the word "Godhead" might have had for Marlowe's audience.[292] This word was opposed to notions of idolatry in

---

288. For express orders to do so, see Exod. 23:24; 34:13; Deut. 7:5. For instances when altars and idols were dealt with in this manner, see 2 Kgs. 11:18; 18:4; 23:14; 2 Chr. 14:3; 23:17; 31:1; 34:4; Isa. 21:9. For plans to do so, see Jer. 43:13; etc.

289. For a prophecy to that effect, see 1 Kgs. 13:2. For instances when idolatrous priests were slain, see 2 Kgs. 11:18; 23:20; 2 Chr. 23:17; etc.

290. See above, pp. 325-326; p. 325, notes 284, 285. Fulke Greville sees the burning of books, "fair monuments of mind", as part of the works of war: see Alexander B. Grosart, ed., The Works in Verse and Prose Complete of Right Honourable Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke (London, 1870) vol. 2, "A Treatie of Warres", pp. 103 ff., stanza 10.

291. See Isa. 21:9; 48:5; Jer. 25:6; 50:2, 38; 51:17, 47, 52; etc.

292. The word often appears in homiletic literature. The Nestorian heresy had sensitized the Christian world to the theories about the double nature of Christ, of his Godhead or divinity combined with his manhood; see Robert Abbot, op. cit., n. 20, p. 83. "The godhead in the man Iesus Christ ruleth and governeth all things": ibid., op. cit., n. 17, p. 10. See George Abbot, op. cit., n. 20, pp. 107 and 377.

Holy Scripture. Luke says the following about believers: "Forasmuch then, as we are the generacion of God, we ght not to thinke that the Godhead is like unto gold, or siluer, or stone grauen by arte and inuention of man",[293] to which the Biblical commentator on Luke's views has added: "He condemneth the matter and the forme wherewith God is counterfaited"[294] and made into an idol. This passage supposes some false gods playing the part of a Godhead, an evil which must be rejected as Tamburlaine rejects Mahomet, a supposed Godhead, and seeks out "another Godhead to adore",[295] the one God in this case. Once again one wonders whether the dramatist was familiar with the theories about the cosmic Mahomet, theories which were inspired by those connected with the cosmic Christ.[296] One of these theories held that because all creation had sprung from the spirit or head of Mahomet, he was the most truly and completely representative of God on earth[297] as well as of the creation of God.[298] Mahomet could therefore be considered a Godhead and play a role identical with that of Christ. For Paul says this on the subject of Christ as a Godhead and its relation to believers: "For the inuisible things of him, that is, his eternal power and Godhead, are sene by the creation of the worlde, being considered in his workes, to the intent that they shulde be without excuse"[299] for not believing. Thus, creation is understood to

---

293. G.V., Acts 17:29.

294. G.V., Acts 17:29, n. (p).

295. Marlowe might have read about other instances when pagan or Turkish generals had rejected their Mahomet because he had proved useless as a help on the battlefield: see George Abbot, op. cit., n. 20, pp. 74.

296. See above, pp. 184 ff.

297. See above, pp. 187 ff. and notes.

298. See p. 187.

299. G.V., Rom. 1:20.

reveal the Godhead or to be summed up by the Godhead as Mahomet was understood to be the sum of creation and a reflection of God at the same time. The concept was definitely connected with Christ for again Paul says the following: "For in him dwelleth all the fulnes of the Godhead bodely"[300] to which the following comment was added: "In saying that the Godhead is really in Christ, he sheweth that he is verie God: also saying, in him, he declareth two distincte natures, and by this worde dwelleth he proueth that it is there foreuer".[301] Tamburlaine does not choose Christ as a new Godhead; it could not have been in keeping with the Moslem aspects of Tamburlaine. But the word might have inferred notions about Christ, as other lines in this passage do, in which Christ-Mahomet parallels are implied. The imamite doctrine by which Mahomet and the imam are sums of creation, as Christ is, might be intimated in these lines.[302]

During the course of the scene, Tamburlaine is challenging Mahomet to come down and save his book from the flames. He calls to him, "Come downe thy selfe and worke a myracle" (2T 5.1.187). This line is followed by this remark made to Mahomet:

> Thou art not worthy to be worshipped
> That suffers flames of fire to burne the writ
> Wherein the sum of thy religion rests.
>
> (2T 5.1.187-190)

This passage seems to echo similar taunts made to Christ while he was on the cross. Passers-by called out to him: "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross",[303] or again, "Save thyself, and come down from the

---

300. G.V., Col. 2:9.

301. G.V., Col. 2:9, n. (c).

302. See above, pp. 217-219; p. 217, n. 380.

303. Matt. 27:40.

cross".[304] In other words, if Christ was worthy to be worshipped,[305] he should be able to save himself and, thereby, guarantee the validity of his teaching, as Mahomet is now called upon to save his book and prove the worth of his doctrine. In reality, Tamburlaine's taunts addressed to Mahomet and those made to Christ are basically concerned with assessing the value of the doctrine by the power of its author. Inferences of this kind could have meaning only in a Christian context for Moslems held that Christ had never been crucified; he had not died on the cross but had been substituted by another person, possibly by Judas.[306] The purpose of this rejection of the dogma about the death of Christ was to cancel at the same time the belief in the resurrection of Christ,[307] an aspect of his life which Mahomet had been unable to emulate. Daring Mahomet to "worke a myracle" could not but recall Christ the miracle-worker of the New Testament. Finally, short of asking Mahomet to save himself, asking him to save his writ was the next best dramatic device to use to force him to prove his worth. If one remembers the sort of identity or entity, or even divinity, which was perceived in the Koran, Tamburlaine's challenge becomes most eloquent. One may say that the writ, as the truest embodiment of Mahomet's being or spirit, had developed, so to speak, an individuality and a life of its own, was a deity or an idol by its own right.[308] Because there existed a close link between Mahomet and his book, the Prophet's inability to save his book, symbolically, amounted to the inability of saving himself. Finally, another indirect allusion is made to Christ in Tamburlaine's lines

---

304. Mark 15:30. See also Luke 23:35.

305. Cf. 2T 5.1.187.

306. See Wherry, op. cit., n. 241, vol. 2, pp. 21-22, n.; Guillaume, op. cit., n. 114, p. 196. See also Rodinson, op. cit., n. 243, p. 239; Koran, ed. cit., n. 187, p. 427, sura 4:156.

307. See above, p. 158, n. 93.

308. See above, pp. 319 ff.

about Mahomet's throne "Where men report, thou sitt'st by God himselfe" (2H 5.1.193). This was in keeping with the Islamic tradition. Mohammed, or Mahomet in this case, was as close to God as it was possible to be, sitting by the throne of God. But Christian tradition reserved this place for Christ. Numerous are the Biblical texts which support this view.[309] Tamburlaine's line emphasizes the fact that Mahomet was thus the usurper of the place of Christ as Son of God, or God, for that matter, and was fulfilling, thereby, the precise role attributed to idols, that of usurping from God the worship and reverence due him.[310]

One must admit that the attitude to Christ which Tamburlaine might imply by these lines is entirely in conformity with that of Islam. Christ was considered a prophet slightly inferior to Mahomet and no more than a prophet.[311] Moslems did not admit any more divine Sonship in Christ than they would have admitted for Mahomet. Yet, for a Christian audience, as the Elizabethans were, to place Christ on a par with Mahomet was grossly blasphemous. Making an idol of Christ in this way was as evil as making gods out of wood, stone, or books, for that matter. By these allusions, Marlowe was strongly emphasizing the idolatrous connotations which he seemingly wished to link with this scene. By introducing inferences of this nature, Marlowe was providing the audience with additional reasons why Bajazet, the Turks, and now Mahomet through his writ should be destroyed and why Tamburlaine,

---

309. Sitting by God, at his right hand, the place of highest honour and glory, is the honour exclusively reserved for Christ in heaven: see Matt. 22:44; Mark 14:62; 16:19; Luke 20:42; Acts 2:34; Col. 3:1; Heb. 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; etc. The following speak of Christ at the right hand of God: Acts 2:33; 7:55, 56; Rom. 8:34. Instructional and homiletic literature also refers to this detail: see The Summe of Christian Religion: Comprehended in sixe principal Questions, seruing for instruction of the simpler sort (London, 1617), Sig. A 7v; Abbot, op. cit., n. 17, p. 10.

310. "Let there be no strange god in thee, nether worship thou anie strange god": G.V., Psa. 81:9. God warns his people "that thei shulde not cleaue to anie but to the liuing God when thei shulde be emong the idolaters": G.V., Isa. 44:21, n. (a).

311. See above, pp. 291 ff.

the agent by whom these idols and idolaters were annihilated, should be approved, admired, and acclaimed for his stand against idolatry. Marlowe was thus, by indirect means and to some extent, making Tamburlaine sympathetic to an Elizabethan audience. All these points decidedly promoted Tamburlaine to a position superior, in the estimation of a Christian audience, to the one occupied by Bajazeth in the first part of the play and by the Turks in general, as Bajazet's successors, in the second part of Tamburlaine.

If the dramatist's position with respect to the Christ-Mahomet parallel poses problems, one might remember the place of Christ in the defeat of Sigismund and Frederick. In many ways, Orcanes's challenge to Christ resembles Tamburlaine's to Mahomet. The image of the Christ who saves Orcanes and his armies is truly orthodox; this is made clear in Sigismund's description of him in his oath made with the Turks. He says:

> By him that made the world, and sav'd my soul,
> The sonne of God and issue of a Mayd,[312]
> Sweet Jesus Christ ...
>
> (2T 1.1.133-135)

Later, Orcanes challenges this same Christ to prove himself the Son of God (2T 2.2.41) endowed with the power of that God (2T 2.2.42) as he says:

> Thou Christ that art esteem'd omnipotent,
> If thou wilt proove thy selfe a perfect God,
> Worthy the worship of all faithfull hearts,
>
> (2T 2.2.55-57)

and begs him to defend the Christians. He spurs his warlords on to battle with the words: "... on Christ still let us crie, / If there be Christ, we shall have victorie" (2T 2.2.63-64). The proof of the power of Christ hangs on the victory. Events show that Christ is a perfect God, the Son of God. Christ's position in the play, obviously, is that of a God as opposed to

---

312. "Jesus Christ, ..., who was borne of the virgin Marie ...": G.V., Rev. 12:5, n. (h).

that of Mahomet, who is not worthy of worship because he cannot prove himself a god. Christ was able to meet the challenge put to him by Orcanes while Mahomet fails to answer the one made to him by Tamburlaine. Christ answers Orcanes's prayer even if the effect be detrimental to his own cause, while Mahomet cannot even save his own. One may aptly object that Orcanes hardly recognizes Christ's power to be greater than Mahomet's at the end of the scene after his victory. The answer to this might be that Marlowe takes care to restore the objectionable side of Orcanes's character as an idolatrous Moslem, and makes him all the more deserving to be scourged by Tamburlaine after being so ungrateful. One must note that while this defeat of the Christians by the Turks was drawn from the Varna incident mentioned above, Orcanes's debating on the power of Christ vesus that of Mahomet after his victory was of Marlowe's invention, and was undoubtedly included to fulfil some dramatic need of the play. Nevertheless, Christ remains, in the whole play, the only heavenly power which could answer prayers efficiently and be able to intervene in the course of events.

Thus, while Tamburlaine is destroying the myth of Mahomet's deity, the similarities between this scene and that of Orcanes with respect to Christ destroy at the same time the myth of Mahomet's superiority to Christ. The image of Christ as a perfect living God is preserved in the play while Mahomet leaves the audience with that of a helpless idol. Mahomet, whom Tamburlaine had thought a god, is unable to harm him who "shakes his sword" (2T 5.1.195) against his majesty.

As the Baal episode shows, the purpose of the challenges put to idols in the Bible was always to make the congregation experience the power of God in contrast with the helplessness of false gods.[313] Marlowe takes time to

---

313 Many are the Biblical texts, or the commentaries on the texts, which compare the power of idols as opposed to that of God, or tell of ways of testing both. Condemnation of the idols follows the proofs that they can do nothing. "He condemneth all idoles, forasmuche as thei

cont.....

emphasize the weakness of Mahomet on grounds which constituted in a special way the strength if Islam or of Mahomet himself. The strength of a good Moslem, as Mahomet had been himself and as he had taught his followers to be, lay in his efficiency on the battlefield and in being a good warrior for the cause of monotheism.[314] Tamburlaine points out the inefficiency of Mahomet in that respect as opposed to that of God[315] as well as to his own as Scourge of God. Mahomet has proved himself thoroughly incapable of saving the "millions of Turkes" (2T 5.1.179) whom Tamburlaine's sword has sent to hell along with "his Priests, his kinsmen, and his friends" (2T 5.1.180). The deity of Mahomet, as well as his utter helplessness as a sacred figure, is later corroborated by Callapine's words in the next scene. He laments over the losses of the Turks as follows:

> Ah sacred Mahomet, thou that has seene
> Millions of Turkes perish by Tamburlaine,
> Kingdomes made waste, brave cities sackt and burnt,
> And but one hoste is left to honor thee ...
> (2T 5.2.24-27)

and he begs his aid. These words reflect the despondent feelings of Mahomet's last great Turkish leader who remains to be defeated. The last line of

---

313. Continued ..... can do no workes to declare that thei are gods": G.V., Ps. 86:8, n. (f). God warns his people "that idoles haue nether power nor life, and that their deliuerance came not by idoles, but by the mightie power of God": G.V., Ps. 135:15, n. (g). "The superstitious and idolaters haue more trust in our idol, and in some one place then in another: but al in vayne": B.V., Isa. 16:11, n. (a). The Lord "biddeth the idolaters to proue their religion and to bring forthe their idoles, that they may be tryed whether thei knowe all things and can do all things: which if they can not do, he concludeth that they are no gods, but vile idoles": G.V., Isa. 41:21, n. (r). So is Mahomet challenged to prove his religion. This whole chapter in Isaiah is about the living God taunting lifeless idols. The following note underscores the foolishness of Mahomet's laws and condemns both idols and idolaters: "When I loked whether the idoles colde do these things, I founde that they had nether wisdome nor power to do anie thing: therefore, he concludeth that all are wicked, that trust in suche vanitie": G.V., Isa. 41:28, n. (b); etc.

314. See above, p. 149 and n. 47; p. 155 and notes 75, 76; p. 156 and notes 81, 82.

315. The power of God in war is emphasized in the following Scripture texts about idols: "They can not withstande any kyng or battayle: how may it
(continued overleaf ....)

Callapine's speech presents the purpose of armies and warfare to be that of honouring the "sacred Mahomet", a part of the cult of worship exercised in honour of the idol of Islam. Once more the activities of the Turks appear in a strongly idolatrous slant.

Gods and idols were also tested by assessing their power over nature. Tamburlaine emphasizes the utter weakness of Mahomet by allusions to the power of the true God over natural phenomena. This God, supposedly akin to the one of Israel and the Christians, manifests his power by exercising control over elements for he is a God "From whom the thunder and the lightning breaks" (2T 5.1.183), who, as Tamburlaine implies in the following lines, calls on and puts whirlwinds to his use. Tamburlaine challenges Mahomet to display his powers in the same way; he orders him to send "a furious whyrlwind downe / To blow /his/ Alcaron up to /his/ throne" (2T 5.1.191-192), and to save his book. At least, he could strike "vengeance on the head of Tamburlain" (2T 5.1.194), a vengeance which might be expected to fall in the form of a fire from heaven, or of thunder or lightning, as Tamburlaine's God would do or as the Biblical God of Israel did many times.[316] On several occasions, in the course of the history of Israel, God had wielded the weapon of whirlwinds[317] to strike terror among the enemy or to lift his prophet from the

---

315. Continued .... then be thought or graunted that they be goddes?": B.V., Baruch 6:55. "Howe can menne thinke then that they be goddes, whiche neither may defende them selues from warre, nor deliuer them from misfortune?": B.V., Baruch 6:49.

316. For thunder and lightning as expressions of God, see Exod. 19:16; 1 Sam. 7:10; 12:18; 2 Sam. 22:15; Ps. 18:14; 144:6; etc.

317. Whirlwinds are a rather important feature of natural phenomena which God calls upon to manifest his judgments. God speaks to Job out of a whirlwind: see Job 38:1; 40:6. God's anger comes out in the form of whirlwinds: see Nah. 1:3; Ezek. 1:4; Jer. 30:23; G.V., Ps. 58:9; etc. "A violent whirle winde shal fal downe vpon the head of the vngodly": B.V., Jer. 23:19. "The whirlwind shall scatter them": Isa. 41:16. "The whirle winde wil take them away as stubble": G.V., Isa. 40:24. Tamburlaine could rightly expect to be struck down by a whirlwind if it was in Mahomet's power to do so.

earth into some heavenly region.[318] Thus the weakness of Mahomet is brought out in that he cannot do what the God of Israel could do as readers of the Bible well knew. The same could be said of fires from heaven which Tamburlaine challenges Mahomet to send down. In several scenes of the Old Testament, God proves his power over idols in this way.[319] The conclusion to this scene is that Mahomet is an idol who "cannot heare the voice of Tamburlain" (2T 5.1.198) who cannot save his own, not even what is most personally his like the record of his teaching and who cannot strike at his greatest enemy and rival who has proved himself more powerful than the Moslem Prophet: "Mahomet remaines in hell" (2T 5.1.197), says Tamburlaine, the place for idols as well as for idolaters, that is, the millions of Turks and others Tamburlaine has sent to hell. Mahomet's writ goes up in flames.[320]

This scene leads Tamburlaine to make the obvious decision, that is, to turn to the true God by declaring in his own words: "him will I obey" (2T 5.1.184). This declaration is an echo to several similar passages occurring in similar circumstances in the Bible. Obeying God's laws was the characteristic of his true followers[321] while refusing to obey his laws, especially

---

318. "... and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven": 2 Kgs. 2:11. If the Koran was really a book sent down from heaven (See Cherry, op. cit., n. 241, vol. 2, p. 111, n.), then it only seems logical that God or Mahomet should send down a whirlwind to take it up to heaven again.

319. See Lev. 10:2; 1 Kgs. 18:24; 1 Chr. 21:26; Job 1:16; Isa. 66:15; Ecclus. 48:3; etc.

320. "The false god, wherein ye put your confidence, shal be consumed as easely as a piece of towe": G.V., Isa. 1:31, n. (p).

321. "Hearken, and obey my voyce, and I shalbe your God, and ye shalbe my people": B.V., Jer. 7:23. "Be obedient vnto my voyce ...": B.V., Jer. 11:4, etc. Obedience to God's laws is the necessary condition to be adopted as his people and to be prosperous.

in connection with worship, was the proof of idolatry.[322] To proclaim a decision to obey God, as Tamburlaine does, amounted to a conversion of heart. God punished idolaters in the Old Testament because they did not obey his laws. Obedience to God was the proof of the loyalty of his servants. Finally, Tamburlaine realizes he must "seek out another Godhead to adore" (2T 5.1.199) and turns to "The God that sits in heaven, if any God, / For he is God alone, and none but he" (2T 5.1.200-201).[323] However, Tamburlaine's profession of faith leaves the reader on an ambiguous note.

Tamburlaine's new commitment to "the God that sits in heaven" raises questions. What change in Tamburlaine is this new pledge supposed to signify? What has Tamburlaine become that he was not before? How does Tamburlaine's new monotheism differ from the one to which he was already committed as a Moslem, however tenuous his allegiance to Islam may have been? For, Orcanes also previously proclaimed his faith in the God "that sits on high and never sleeps, / Nor in one place is circumscriptible" (2T 2.2.49-50). Orcanes's monotheism appears in no way different from or inferior to that of Tamburlaine. Furthermore, the description of his God is as orthodox as that of Tamburlaine: both could be used to define the God of Israel. However, Tamburlaine's act of faith may derive much of its meaning from the dramatic moment which Marlowe has chosen for it. Tamburlaine's creed is possibly more eloquent by what is omitted than by what is actually said. Elizabethans

---

322. "But my people woulde not heare my voyce: and Israel woulde not obey me": B.V., Psa. 81:11. Israel was reduced to captivity "because thei wolde not obey the worde of God": G.V., Isa. 5:13, n. (t). Israel realizes why it is chastised: "We haue not obeyed hym. We haue not hearkened vnto the voyce of the Lorde our God": B.V., Baruch, 1:18.

323. The God to whom Tamburlaine commits himself strongly suggests the God of Israel. First, this Lord, as does Tamburlaine's God, sits in heaven: see 1 Kgs. 22:19; 2 Chr. 18:18; Psa. 2:4; 47:8; 99:1; Isa. 6:1; etc. Tamburlaine's allegiance is strictly monotheistic. Too numerous to be enumerated here are the Biblical texts which proclaim the one God, that there is no other God but he: see Psa. 86:8, 10; Isa. 37:16, 20; 45:11; 44:6; 45:5, 6, 14, 21, 22; 46:9; Jer. 10:6, 7; Wisdom of Solomon 12:13; Ecclus. 36:2, 5, 11; Mark 12:32; 1 Cor. 8:4; etc.

were familiar with the Moslem one: "There is no God but Allah, and Mahomet is his Prophet". Because Tamburlaine's pledge follows close upon a radical rejection of Mahomet and all he stands for, the audience may deduce that any Islamic inferences are irrevocably ruled out. Furthermore, because the scene of the burning of the Koran is replete with Biblical connotations, Tamburlaine's profession of faith evokes similar ones made by newly, partially or totally, converted Biblical heroes. Elizabethans could easily recall analogous situations in the history of Israel when idols had been destroyed in order to make room for monotheism in the same way that Tamburlaine has now destroyed Mahomet and his book. Thus, the incidents leading up to Tamburlaine's option for "the only God" to some extent qualify and define it. There are some details also in the following scene which could equally define Tamburlaine's pledge.

Tamburlaine's allegiance to monotheism crowns a scene during which he has renewed his commitment to the God of justice:

> There is a God full of revenging wrath,
> From whom the thunder and the lightning breaks,
> Whose Scourge I am, and him will I obey.
>
> (2T 5.1.182-184)

Tamburlaine resolves to obey this God while fulfilling his own mission as the scourge and the warrior of this God. In the following scene, Callapine plans to challenge Tamburlaine's armies and, thereby, hopes to be the "obedient servant" of Mahomet. The contrast between Tamburlaine's service to the true God and Callapine's to what Tamburlaine has proved to be but an idol would not escape an audience sensitized to the religious issues which divided Islam from Christendom. Callapine's devotion to Mahomet has reaffirmed the idolatrous character of the Turks and the need for Tamburlaine's mission as Scourge of God. The conflict anticipated between Tamburlaine and the Turks is set again squarely upon the basis of a monotheism-versus-idolatry issue and justifies Tamburlaine's initiatives and victories to the last. Tamburlaine's

creed might appear ambiguous; however, if it is viewed against analogous situations in the Bible and if its dramatic place is taken into account, Tamburlaine's pledge to monotheism becomes relevant and meaningful.

A second note of ambiguity in Tamburlaine's creed is introduced by his conditional "if any God" (2T 5.1.2[illegible]0). Scholars have puzzled over these words. Paul H. Kocher describes it as "a venomous little phrase"[324] which, because of the agnosticism it entailed, was interpreted as a form of "atheism" by the Elizabethans and caused Tamburlaine and his creator to be labelled as atheists.[325] Kocher tries to interpret the "little phrase". He is aware that to read in those words a proof of agnosticism on Tamburlaine's part is to make the line inconsistent with the rest of the context in which it appears. As far as the dramatist's part in the phrase is concerned, Kocher finds it reflects similar questions asked by Ralegh and his friends in a Cerne Abbas investigation and some statements in the Baines Report.[326] Because the phrase is irreconcilable with the rest of Tamburlaine's thinking and is "the sole hint of agnosticism"[327] in the passage, Kocher settles the problem by supposing that the phrase must be "one of those badgering interpolations that Marlowe used in his war against Christianity",[328] an explanation which resorts to supposed biographical data about the author to explain the presence of those words in the play. Kocher interprets the phrase as the result of a sudden

---

324. Paul H. Kocher, Christopher Marlowe: A Study of his Thought, Learning and Character (New York, 1946), p. 89.

325. See ibid.

326. See ibid.

327. Ibid.

328. Ibid.

impulse or of "an automatic association of ideas"[329] on the part of the dramatist. Thus, from the acknowledged orthodoxy in the rest of Tamburlaine's speech, Kocher moves into subjective criticism to shed light on Tamburlaine's words. However, the phrase possibly may best be explained and its use justified by studying its place and apparent role in the play.

There are three, or four, challenges of this sort in Tamburlaine: their parallels and differences may shed light on Tamburlaine's "little phrase". These are made to Christ by Orcanes, to Mahomet by Tamburlaine and to God, in this case, again by Tamburlaine. In the first instance, Orcanes, infuriated by the Christians' breach of treaty, directly challenges Christ. A challenge made to Christ may appear exotic on the lips of a Moslem, however, Orcanes has rightly supposed that Christ is the party offended in this case by the outrageous behaviour of the Christians and, therefore, most ready to exercise vengeance against them. Christ is thus summoned to prove or reinstate his divine power as a "son to everliving Jove" (2T 2.2.41-42) or, in other words, to prove himself "a perfect God / Worthy the worship of all faithfull hearts" (2T 2.2.55-56) and grant him a victory over the Christians. Except for the line on Mahomet (2T 2.2.44), Orcanes's plea is absolutely orthodox by Christian standards. The inclusion of the line about Mahomet makes the passage somewhat orthodox by Moslem standards as well, for Christ must not exceed Mahomet in power and prestige. A second time in this passage, Orcanes resorts to what Kocher calls "the gibing little 'if' clause"[330] or to the disturbing little phrase "if there be Christ". This time, Christ is even challenged to prove that he exists by the second "if there be Christ"

---

329. Ibid., p. 90.

330. Ibid., p. 96.

(2T 2.2.54). The battle is waged and an overwhelming victory is won by Orcanes. The answer to Orcanes's pleas proves that there is a Christ who heeds requests and that he is a perfect God who exercises justice. Later, Orcanes makes reservations about Christ's part in the victory; perhaps the dramatist felt he had to reinstate Orcanes as a full-fledged Moslem for the remainder of the play, but the existence of Christ is never questioned again.

The second challenge of a similar nature is made by Tamburlaine to Mahomet during the scene of the burning of the Koran. In many ways, Tamburlaine's words to Mahomet parallel those of Orcanes to Christ. Mahomet's existence is not questioned but his power as a god certainly is. The Prophet is summoned to prove he has divine power by performing a miracle and thus be worthy to be worshipped (2T 5.1.186-188). The word "myracle" recalls the discussion between Orcanes and Gazellus about miracles brought about by chance or natural causes; the word might have reminded Elizabethans about the long-standing concern of the Moslems, that Mahomet be proved as great as Christ by his power to perform miracles. Whereas Orcanes addressed Christ as "the son to everliving Jove", Tamburlaine alludes to the belief that Mahomet enjoyed the honour of sitting by God himself (2T 5.1.193). The analysis of this scene has proved that Mahomet behaves in every way like the idols of the Bible. Mahomet does not answer Tamburlaine's taunts and the Koran is not saved from the flames. The conclusion is that Mahomet has no power, is not worthy of worship and, therefore, is not a god but a mere idol. In constrast to Christ who has proved he exists and is "a perfect God", Mahomet is a false god who deserves to be destroyed as were the idols of the Bible. It must be noted, however, that Christ's existence and power reveal themselves as those of a God who punishes evil; similarly, God is a Scourge who, through his agent Tamburlaine, destroys idolatry symbolized by the burning of the Koran.

The last 'if' clause is Tamburlaine's "venomous little phrase" which creates ambiguity about his profession of faith. Tamburlaine believes in "the only God", "if any God" (2T 5.1.200). The two previous challenges made to Christ and Mahomet create an expectation in the audience; if there is any God, he should answer and manifest his power. Does God prove he exists? Does he exercise any power? What could the manner in which he proves his power reveal about himself and others? It may be pointed out that, in the lines leading up to this profession, Tamburlaine has been eager to prove his superiority over Mahomet whom previously he had thought a god. What is Tamburlaine now? The fact that Tamburlaine is speedily stricken down only seventeen lines later or almost immediately after he has challenged God to prove he exists is surely meant to convey some information about Tamburlaine himself, especially when he interprets his illness as a blow dealt to him directly from some God (2T 5.3.42). In the light of the two previous challenges, the reader is left to wonder who Tamburlaine really is as a religious figure, what he truly is in the face of God, and what is the nature of his relationship with that God. Meanwhile Marlowe's three challenges have served the purpose of distinguishing idols from God and Christ, and of implying the true spiritual character of his hero. Tamburlaine's spiritual image is ambivalent to say the least and stands in need of further clarification.[331]

Other inferences to idolatry may be present in the vision which Anasia, one of Callapine's Turkish kings, describes in the following scene. He says:

> ... I see great Mahomet
> Clothed in purple clowdes, and on his head
> A Chaplet brighter than Apollos crowne,
> Marching about the ayer with armed men,
> To joine with you against this Tamburlaine.
>
> (2T 5.2.31-35)

---

331. See below, pp. 446 ff. and 591 ff.

While Anasia tries to stir up Callapine's courage, it must be pointed out that his prophetic vision does not turn out to be entirely true. Tamburlaine will not be defeated by Callapine (2T 5.3.115) nor by Mahomet's armed men but by illness and death. However, what is Marlowe trying to tell his audience by speaking of a Mahomet dressed in purple clouds? Who is meant by Apollo in this passage? Who are these armed men marching about in the air? Could this vision be a parody of the idealized Mahomet, who was described above,[332] or of the second coming of Christ who, as is mentioned several times in Holy Scripture,[332] is to come again carried on clouds? If so, this would be another inference on the part of a Turkish character, of Mahomet being somewhat like another Christ, an inference of an idolatrous nature. But why purple clouds? Purple was the colour reserved for royalty.[333] While Male notes in his study that, because Christ was honoured as a King by popular devotion and because he is referred to as a King of Kings in the Bible, purple seems to have been used exclusively for him in the stained glass illustrations

---

332. "God in the clouds" is a frequent theme in the Bible. "For who in he in the cloudes that shal matche God?": B.V., Psa. 89:6. "The Lord rideth upon a swift cloud ...": Isa. 19:1. The idea of Christ returning to earth, "coming in a cloud, with power and great glory", appears in the New Testament: see Luke 21:27. See also Mark 14:62. The second coming of Christ riding in clouds is a major theme of the apocalyptic texts of the Bible: see Dan, 7:13; Rev. 1:7. Christ appears as a mighty angel coming "downe from heauen, clothed with a cloude, and the raynebow vpon his head, and his face as it were the Sunne": B.V., Rev. 10:1. See also Rev. 14:14. Did Marlowe know that apocalyptic themes were favourite themes of the Moslems?

333. Purple was also a colour of distinction. The King of Babylon clothes Daniel with purple in return for his services: see Dan. 5:7, 16, 29.

of Biblical themes during the Middle Ages down through the sixteenth century.[334] Thus the purple colour was generally associated with Christ revered as King. On the other hand there is an interesting comment in the Bishops' Bible. The comment deals with statues which are considered to be idols by those expounding the doctrine of the Reformation. In that Bible's version of a verse in Jeremiah, part of which runs as follows: "wood is the teachyng of vanitie",[335] the word "wood" is explained as follows:

> By wood is ment al kynde of matter whereof images are wont to be made, whiche although they be garnished with gold and siluer, and clothed in purple and silke, and set up, as somme men say, to be lay mens bookes; yet teach they nothing saith the prophete but vanitie.[336]

Does Marlowe include Mahomet's "purple clouds" in his text in order to remind the Elizabethans of images of this kind, images which were considered as idols? Mahomet is said to wear a chaplet. Is this a kind of crown or halo such as was commonly attached onto the head of statues of the kind which had been venerated in churches in the past and were now condemned by the Reformation movement? Who is Apollo in this case? Emile Mâle mentions that Michelangelo portrayed Christ in one of his paintings in the traits of an Apollo.[337] Surely this instance was not unique of its kind; similar associations between Christ and Apollo were possibly frequently made. Mahomet's chaplet is said

---

334. This colour is reserved for Christ portrayed as man: see Mâle, op. cit., n. 240, p. 68.

335. B.V., Jer. 10:8.

336. B.V., Jer. 10:8, n. (a). Purple seems to have had special associations with idols, in the popular mind at the time, as this abusive comment on the Mass would seem to show: "But an ape will be an ape still though he be clothed in purple, and the Masse though it (...) be decked with flowres of antiquitie, shall remaine nothing else but a filthie and abhominable idoll": Robert Abbot, op. cit., n. 20, p. 30.

337. See op. cit., n. 240, p. 264.

to be brighter than the crown of Apollo.[338] Is Mahomet's chaplet, a symbol of the victories yet to come, meant to outshine the crown of Christ the King, personified by Apollo? What did Marlowe mean by the vision of Mahomet leading armies in heaven to join Callapine in his struggle against Tamburlaine and how was it to be understood? Did the dramatist wish to recall similar visions in the Bible, of armies marching in the heavens as signs of better days to come?[339] Does the whole vision predict that Mahomet will rise again a figure more powerful and glorious than Christ, an idea which could be expected from the Moslem Turks? Is this vision symbolic, as all visions are expected to be about some theme, of the fact that the future holds wars and victories in store for Islam, that the Moslem faith will yet hold a sway greater than that held by Christianity in many parts of the world? This vision seems to suggest a kind of resurrection of the idol Mahomet in spite of the fact that Tamburlaine has destroyed Mahomet's "abstracts of /his/ foolish lawes" (2T 5.1.196),

---

338. The apocalyptic reappearance of Christ is described as follows: "... and beholde, a white cloude, and vpon the cloude one sitting like vnto the sonne of man, hauing on his head a golden crowne, ...": D.V., Rev. 14:14. Was Marlowe thinking of the highly ornamented halos with which Christ was represented in the Christian art of the Middle Ages and later? See Mâle, op. cit., n. 240, pp. 14-15, fig. 10 and 11; p. 19, fig. 15. See also above, p. 344 n. 333.

339. Did Marlowe wish to recall the vision described in the second book of the Maccabees?

> And then were there seene through out all the citie of Iarusalem, fortie dayes long, horsemen running in the aire, with robes of golde, and as bandes of speare men,
> And as troopes of horsemen set in array, incountering and coursing one against another with shaking of shields and multitude of dartes and drawing of swordes, and shoting of arrowes, and the glittering of the golden armour seene, and harnes of all sortes.
> Therefore euerie man prayed, that those tokens might turne to good.
>
> (G.V., 2 Macc. 5:2-4)

Did Marlowe have in mind notions like the following that the "bright Powers in Heaven, which like a ranged Battell march and moue in their order", meaning the stars which influence life on earth? See King, op. cit., n. 86, p. 4. See also Ecclus, 43:9. It might be pointed out that the Book of Maccabees is the only Biblical work mentioned in Marlowe's Plays: see JM 2.3.153.

has killed Moslem Turks by the millions, and has rejected Mahomet altogether? Is Mahomet, as a parody of Christ, to reaffirm his presence in a new coming, a coming which foretells that the power of Islam was not to end with Tamburlaine's victorious wars as events of the future were to prove and as Elizabethans already knew?

And so an attempt to analyse the theme of idolatry has been made. What does the analysis reveal about Tamburlaine, the other characters, and the play as a whole? Once again, as was the case for the Moslem traits described in a previous chapter, Marlowe has shielded Tamburlaine, apparently at least, from any idolatrous associations which might mar the image of the hero and discredit him in the minds of the audience. Marlowe keeps him on a more or less neutral ground as far as religious commitments are concerned. Tamburlaine is not openly presented as a Moslem; by the same token, he is preserved, again apparently, from any taint of idolatry. On the other hand, Marlowe presents the Turks as idolatrous in what they say and do. The dramatist incorporates Biblical connotations into the Moslem practices of Bajazet and his colleagues which make these practices doubly comdemnable. In addition to the ignominy of being Moslem Turks, Bajazet and his colleagues are associated with the evils of idolatry as these appear in the Bible. Marlowe takes care that the odium of idolatry be preserved around the Turks by including allusions to what were supposedly contemporary idolatrous practices. Thus, Tamburlaine and the Turks are differentiated on the basis of religious allegiances and the manner in which these allegiances are expressed.

Marlowe uses religious issues to build up dramatic tension between the two opposing parties in the play, between those whose evil must be eradicated and those whose mission it is to exterminate it. Marlowe does not make the theme of idolatry glaringly evident, it is true; possibly, he did not have to do so. By Christian standards, the notions of idolatry

were so firmly rooted in anything Islamic that the introduction of idolatrous connotations in the play might have appeared quite natural. However, if the dramatist wished to exploit this theme, he could simply start from the already commonly understood and accepted assumptions linked with the notions of idols and idolaters associated with Islam at this time. The word "Turk" was symbolic of every form of cruelty and tyranny that could be conceived, including the evil of idolatry. Marlowe could simply make use of this conventional image of the Turk and, at the same time, keep his hero free from such associations. The crimes perpetrated by Tamburlaine could then be justified on the basis of the religious motives behind them. Marlowe's audiences probably needed little explanation to make them understand that the odium of idolatry was the main idea and issue at stake. Sigismund and his lords were there to remind them of the traditional position of Christians in face of Islam. As Marlowe dramatized the hostility between Tamburlaine and Bajazet or the Turks, the fact that Turks were heathens, a prerequisite to incur the guilt of all forms of idolatry, could be taken for granted.

It would seem that this theme as a constituent and valid element of the dramatic action of the play cannot be ignored. It must be noted again that, while it springs from a Moslem context, the theme of idolatry is developed mainly along Biblical lines. Because the Elizabethans were familiar with the Biblical texts, Marlowe could translate an Islamic theme, as it was then understood, into Biblical terms making the action more meaningful and more compatible with the aspirations of his audiences than he might have done otherwise. Marlowe was thus laying a common ground upon which a sympathy could develop between his hero and the audience. However, the development of this theme remains incomplete for the simple reason that much yet remains to be said about Tamburlaine's place in it. Because idolatry, by Biblical standards, supposes the presence of agents

whose mission is to destroy it, the theme calls for the action of such an agent. Also because the struggle between orthodoxy and idolatry is meaningful only within a religious context, one can hardly dissociate the sense of a divine mission and dedication from those engaged in this kind of conflict. The sense of mission of such agents easily evolves into or takes the form of a fanaticism or zeal which may develop into a type of religion. Tamburlaine's sense of mission and singleness of purpose, which are expressed through persistent and continued warfare, have been noted again and again. Tamburlaine fulfils his mission with a religious fervour which cannot be denied. This mission develops into patterns which suggest a religion of war elaborated according to his own norms and standards. Consequently, Tamburlaine's religion of war, its aims, structures, and merits, deserves an investigation on its own. This is the purpose of the next chapter.

Chapter 4

TAMBURLAINE'S RELIGION OF WAR

The religious content in Tamburlaine has always posed difficulties[1] for any student engaged in the problem of unravelling Marlowe's thought. The presence of this religious content in the text cannot be denied as too much vocabulary of a religious nature is incorporated therein for the reader to dismiss lightly the religious dimensions of the play. The "highest God", whether he was meant to be Moslem, Biblical, or Christian, looms in the background of the drama while pagan gods of all sorts are repeatedly introduced and related in one way or another to the thought and action of the play.[2] Words like "sacrifice", "priests", "altars", and others, traditional components of an organized cult, play their part.[3] That the action in Tamburlaine be described as a monotonous series of repetitious episodes may possibly represent a fair assessment of the drama after a cursory reading. However, a study of some of these episodes, which takes into account the religious dimensions implied, reveals a new depth of meaning. In fact, some of these episodes become first and foremost religious incidents of much more import than just happenings introduced for the purpose of filling out the ten acts of Tamburlaine, as some critics suggest. These episodes or religious incidents become symbolic of spiritual truths which seem to map out the substructure of the action providing, at the same time, significant elements of coherence and meaning.

---

1. For examples of such difficulties in Tamburlaine, see Paul H. Kocher, Christopher Marlowe: A Study of his Thought, Learning, and Character (New York, 1946), pp. 69-103.

2. In none of the other Marlovian plays, except in Doctor Faustus, a play essentially focused on the relationship of the soul with God, do the words "God" and "gods" appear as frequently as they do in Tamburlaine, Parts I and II, over sixty times in all.

3. See above, pp. 271 ff.

Critics have repeatedly sensed that the hero in Marlowe's play is more than just a characterization of the great Timur of history or of the Tamerlane of the chronicles and that his dramatic stature bursts forth beyond the human limitations of man.[4] Short of being a god, his spiritual entity hovers between the "Emperiall heaven"[5] and the earthly confines of his human existence. Tamburlaine's sense of dedication to his task of conquering lands involves more than just satisfying his greed for power and victory. His warfare assumes the characteristics of a sacred mission from which he does not feel free to extricate himself as he suggests to those who object to his manner of dealing with Calyphas's defection (2T. 4.1.148 ff.). Tamburlaine becomes a sacred entity with a sacred mission entrusted to him by some supernatural powers or, in other words, a sacred entity who expresses his relationship with a supernatural power through the fulfilment of his mission. These are adequate basic elements upon which a religion may be structured. A god or an idol, an agent of that god or idol, and a relationship between the two, patterned and expressed according to a particular code of ethics: these may constitute the basic threefold components of any organized cult or religion and perhaps, as we shall see, of Tamburlaine's religion of war.

Roy W. Battenhouse detected Marlowe's suggestions of a religion of war in connection with the martial banquet which, he notes, is one of Marlowe's inventions.[6] Battenhouse recognizes certain features of this banquet to have been borrowed from history and from Seneca's Thyestean banquet scene but, he points out, other sources may have been used as well which were "not so easily recognizable". He explains:

> Fundamentally, Tamburlaine's banquet is Paganism's unconscious travesty of The Lord's Supper. The meal has sacramental patterns. First come "Full bowles of wine vnto the God of war".

---

4. See above, pp. 84-86; pp. 298-299.

5. The expression occurs in 1T. 2.7.15; 4.4.30; 2T. 2.2.48; 2.4.35.

6. Roy W. Battenhouse, Marlowe's 'Tamburlaine': A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy (Nashville, Tennessee, 1941), p. 155.

> Then is brought in "a second course" - pastries in the shape of crowns. Tamburlaine, the tyrant-Lord, hands this worldly-bread to his lieutenant disciples. At the same time he invests them with titles promisory of the rewards they are to have for service in his kingdom; and he exhorts them to the pagan virtues of "valour" and "magnanimity". Then, invoking "holy Fates" (Paganism's counterpart to Christian Providence), he goes forth to his triumph by the sword (counterpart of the Christian cross). This is appropriate ritual for hallowing the false Religion of War. The travesty is Marlowe's contrivance for presenting spectacularly the moral significance of an anti-Christ's career.[7]

According to Battenhouse, Marlowe seems to have drawn upon several Christian themes, particularly upon that of the Eucharistic banquet in this case, to present elements of Tamburlaine's martial banquet as counterparts of corresponding Christian elements. While Battenhouse's assumptions seem justified, as a further investigation of this scene plans to show,[8] there is the possibility that Marlowe may have been inspired by other works as well, when he constructed Tamburlaine's religion of war. Fulke Greville describes Mahomet's religion of war as follows:

> Such the religion is of Mahomet,
> His doctrine, onely Warre and hazard teaching:
> His discipline, not how to vse but get;
> His Court, a campe; the law of sword, his preaching:
> Vertues of Peace, he holds effeminate,
> And doth, as vices, banish them his State.
>
> And though the Christian's Gospell, with them be
> Esteem'd the ioyfull embassie of Peace;
> Yet he that doth pretend supremacy
> Vpon their Church, lets not contention cease,
> But with opinions stirres vp kings to Warre,
> And names them martyrs that his furies are.[9]

Elsewhere Greville describes the Church of the Turks. Its spirit is not far removed from that of Mahomet as may be seen in the following lines:

---

7. Ibid., p. 155.

8. See below, pp. 422 ff.

9. Alexander Grosart, ed., The Works in Verse and Prose Complete of Right Honourable Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke (London, 1870), "A Treatie of Warres", vol. 2, p. 109, stanzas 17 and 18.

> The Turkish empire, thus grew vnto height,
> Which first in vnity, passed others farre;
> Their Church was meere collusion and deceit,
> Their court a campe, their discipline a Warre;
> With martiall hopes, and feares, and showes diuine,
> To hazard onely, they did man refine.[10]

To complete the outline of the war ethos promoted by Mahomet, Greville describes how the evil and deceit of Mahomet's spirit of war is disguised under the appearance of virtue and honour, a view of Moslem warfare probably shared by Marlowe's contemporaries in general. Greville writes:

> Thus we see, how these vgly furious spirits
> Of Warre are cloth'd, colour'd, and disguis'd
> With stiles of Vertue, Honour, Zeale, and Merits;
> Whose owne complexion, well anatomis'd,
> A mixture is of pride, rage, auarice,
> Ambition, lust, and euery tragicke vice.[11]

And so Mahomet's religion of war develops into a Church with its martyrs, its doctrine, its discipline, its laws, its virtues, all of which are based on the importance of strife. There remains to identify the idol with which this religion is associated. Greville again offers the answer, which has already been mentioned elsewhere,[12] when he says: "... Mahomet himself an idol makes, / And draws mankind to Mecha for his sake".[13] Thus Greville provides his reader with the principal elements of a systematized religion of war not forgetting the suggestion of a deity which might be expected to preside and direct this religion.

If the theory that Marlowe was modelling his hero on Mahomet, as has been explained before,[14] is valid, Mahomet's religion of war might offer some light as to how Marlowe went about to structure the character and the mission of

---

10. Ibid., p. 127, stanza 64.
11. Ibid., p. 110, stanza 20.
12. See above, p. 305.
13. Grosart, ed. cit., n.9, "A Treatise of Monarchy", vol. 1, p. 185, stanza 518.
14. See above, pp. 159 ff., 174 ff., 195 ff.

Tamburlaine. On the other hand, if Marlowe did not use Greville's description of Mahomet's religion of war to write his play, Greville's work may serve as a basis of comparison and assessment of Tamburlaine's ethos of war. Whether Marlowe used Greville's description or not, Greville's stanzas might be worth keeping in mind while studying Tamburlaine's religion of war. The parallels which seem to exist between the two may help to define the role of Tamburlaine as a warrior.

The business of waging war is central to Tamburlaine's career as it was in that of Mahomet. Tamburlaine seems to be imitating and vying with Mahomet for the first place of honour in warfare; he is compared and judged superior to Mahomet on precisely the extent of his destruction and the numbers he has slain; could Tamburlaine be meant to emerge as a new Mahomet, a founder of a new religion of war, more powerful and greater than the Mahomet of Islam had ever been? The extent of Timur's historical conquests and victories readily promoted the Scythian to a position along with the greatest of the great conquerors in the history of the world including Mahomet. Chronicles were to echo this aspect in the stories of the legendary Tamerlane. If the contemporary image of Mahomet inspired Marlowe in the creation of his hero, then Greville's description of Mahomet's religion of war might be paralleled by the themes of Tamburlaine, the idol, his doctrine of war, his teaching about it, and his martial code of ethics. We might also find ceremonial scenes somewhat akin to religious rituals and possibly inspired by Christian and Biblical themes, as Battenhouse suggests above, as well as by the Moslem doctrines and beliefs relevant to these scenes. This chapter proposes to analyse Tamburlaine's religion of war in the light of that of Mahomet as presented by Greville and complemented by Christian and Biblical elements.

I

The identity of Tamburlaine as an idol could hardly be analysed without charting the spiritual itinerary through which Tamburlaine the man grows, or degenerates depending on the point of view taken by the reader, into Tamburlaine the idol. The process of Tamburlaine's deification is gradual like that of other great characters in history.[15] Samuel C. Chew mentions that Alexander,[16] to whom, according to Thomas Fortescue's opinion, in no point was Tamburlaine inferior,[17] took on in popular tradition "the aspect of a supernatural being", and was the first to undergo such a transformation. Nero's climb to rule led him to yearn for powers of annihilation so great that he made the following rhymed wish his own: "After my death I wishe / Heauen and earth to perishe".[18] Tamburlaine relates himself to these great heroes of antiquity and to others as well. He likes to think of himself as another Alexander who "till he was king of kings he did not rest".[19] Wherever Alexander[20] has triumphed in the past so does Tamburlaine now (2T. 5.1.69-70). His deification,

---

15. The pagan-humanist moral philosophy, especially that of the Romans, was concerned with preserving the greatness of their leading elite whose heroical virtues made demi-gods of them. Consequently, a special pagan heaven had been created for these leaders promoted to deities after their death or a dwelling among the stars had been imagined for them. These notions had made their way through the centuries down to the age of the Renaissance: see Curtis B. Watson, Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor (Princeton, 1960), pp. 102 ff.

16. See Samuel C. Chew, The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance (New York, 1937), p. 7.

17. See Thomas Fortescue, The Foreste, or Collection of Histories ... (London 1571), fol. 83.

18. Quoted in George Whetstones, The English Myrror ... (London, 1586), p. 115.

19. Dauid Lindsey, A Dialogue between Experience and a Courtier of the miserable state of the Worlde (London, 1581), fol. 63. Tamburlaine likes to think of his quest for the crown as a restless pursuit until the goal is reached: see 1T. 2.7.18-29.

20. It was rather commonplace at the time of the Renaissance to compare English monarchs to the heroes of old. George whetstones compares Henry VIII to

(continued overleaf .....)

like Alexander's, may virtually be foreseen as a climax to his triumphs. Earlier in the play, Tamburlaine boasts that his camp is like Caesar's who was never defeated (1T. 3.3.152-153); later he contemplates, as did Antiochus before him,[21] taking his place among the stars; he hopes to scale the heavens like Jove (1T. 1.2.199-201) and "mount the milk-white way" (2T. 4.3.132) or "match the faire Aldeboran" (2T. 4.3.61). To be among the stars in the days of the Renaissance was tantamount to being a god.[22] Nevertheless, there is a Neronian quality about Tamburlaine who, in the throes of his terminal illness, exclaims: "If I perish, heaven and earth may fade" (2T. 5.3.60), an echo to Nero's hopes in similar circumstances. Thus Tamburlaine displays affinities with the greatest who have trodden upon this earth. We may anticipate his spiritual itinerary to be similar to that of the great conquerors and tyrants mentioned above and which Greville sums up in these words: "Men would be tyrants, tyrants would be gods, / Thus they become our scourges, we their rods".[23] Tamburlaine is just such a man; he becomes first a tyrant, then a god, as well as the Scourge of God. As may be expected, Tamburlaine does not necessarily go through these stages successively but develops along more than one at the same time, as the following will show.

Tamburlaine's climb to power suggests superhuman elements at work either in himself or external to himself. Early in the play, Marlowe presents Tamburlaine as an extraordinary man who dwarfs his colleagues into insignificance.

---

20. Continued ..... Alexander: see op. cit., n. 18, p. 120. See also Millar Maclure, The Paul's Cross Sermons: 1534-1642 (Toronto, 1958), p. 71. John King uses the same comparisons in honour of James I: see A Sermon preached in Oxon.: the 5. November 1607 (Oxford, 1607), p. 13.

21. "Thus [he] ... thoght he might reach to the starres of heauen": G.V., 2 Macc. 9:10. Others had enjoyed similar privileges. Andronicus had been "honoured ... as a god, and extolled vnto the heavens": Richard Knolles, The Generall Historie of the Turkes ... (London, 1603), p. 53.

22. See above, p. 354, n. 15.

23. See op. cit., n. 9, "A Treatie of Warres", vol. 2, p. 112, stanza 25.

His unusual powers of persuasion compel submission from all aound him. Zenocrate and her train yield easily enough to the decisions of Tamburlaine but Theridamas's subjection to Tamburlaine is nothing less than striking. The greatest military leader of the Persian army is literally subdued and falls under the spell of both the person and the words of Tamburlaine.[24] Tamburlaine's "intoxicating promises of future conquests"[25] transform in the mind of Theridamas the sight of these mere shepherds into "noble and resolved Scythian warriors"[26] worthy of his allegiance, even at the cost of the betrayal of the trust his king has placed in him. Tamburlaine's extraordinary power of self-transformation seemingly is projected onto his entourage to the point that they soon lose their individual traits and become no more than mirror-images of the hero. They exist in the play in the measure that they further Tamburlaine's ventures; Theridamas's personal initiatives end in failure.[27] Marlowe makes use of these mirror-images to give some insights into the workings of the mind of Tamburlaine and into his scale of values. Tamburlaine's self-deification implies a spiritual itinerary in the course of which values are weighed, choices are made, and the merits of these choices are suggested or revealed. Tamburlaine's mirror-images reflect Tamburlaine's spiritual journey step by step in the initial stages of his self-glorification.

Victories have followed one upon the other in close succession until Tamburlaine reaches a position where the crown is almost within reach. The immediate prospect of being a king focuses the attention of Tamburlaine and his men on the merits of kingship weighed against those of deity. Tamburlaine sounds out his men about the benefits of kingly power; their comments map out the steps

---

24. Theridamas admits as much in these words: "Won with thy words, and conquered with thy looks, / I yeeld my selfe, my men and horse to thee": 1T. 1.2.228-229.

25. Fredson Bowers, ed., The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe (Cambridge, 1973), vol. 1, p. 222.

26. Ibid.

27. The Theridamas-Olympia saga, paralleled in style with that of Tamburlaine and Zenocrate, ends in disaster: see 2T. 3.4. and 4.2.

of Tamburlaine's spiritual journey towards his goal of "an earthly crown". Unsumcasane first assesses the merits of kingship. He judges that "To be a King, is halfe to be a God" (1T. 2.5.56). Is Marlowe summing up in these words the Renaissance theme of the king-god image? As a man, he exercised temporal power; as a representative of God's authority on earth, the king became a godly figure, or even a god. Hence, the double nature of the king-god. Thus, in the words of Usumcasane, to be a king is to be half a god.

This dual image of the king-god was commonplace in Marlowe's days. George Whetstones is one among many who voices his theories about this image.[28] Notions about the king-god relationship were part and parcel of the Elizabethan frame of mind. But what is especially noteworthy is that the theories about this relationship were deeply rooted in the history of Israel, a subject of interest to the Elizabethans. The modern scholar C.I. Scofield sums up this relationship in words which would have sounded familiar to the Elizabethans. In connection with Samuel's choice of a king for Israel, Scofield explains that "the king was made personally responsible to God for his actions" (Hos. 13:13-14).[29] The king's mediatorial role is described in the following words:

> The theocratic kingdom established at Sinai over the nation of Israel, ... was a rule of God administered mediatorially, i.e. through divinely chosen persons who spoke and acted for God in governing functions, and who were directly responsible to God for what they did. These mediatorial rulers could be great leaders like Moses and Joshua, military judges, or even kings; but God is always the real sovereign down to the end of the kingdom in history.[30]

Biblical commentators of the sixteenth-century Bible editions were very conscious of this mediatorial function of rulers and of its relation to God and Christ.

---

28. Op. cit., n. 18, p. 206.

29. C.I. Scofield, ed., Holy Bible: Authorised King James Version (New York, 1967), p. 329, n. 1.

30. Ibid.

Moses was the first ruler to whom divine mediatorial power had been given in an obvious manner. As God explained to Moses the nature of his mission, he told him he should be as God to his brother Aaron while Aaron would be his spokesman[31] and prophet.[32] He confirmed Moses in his ministerial status when he told him "Beholde, I haue made thee Pharaohs God".[33] The commentator explains that "God communicateth his aucthoritie and power with his ministers",[34] that he has given him power and authority to speak in his name and to execute his judgment upon him.[35]

As the mediatorial function of the ruler is understood to be in some degree a form of identity with the God in whose name the ruler or the minister acts, the term "god" will be easily applied to these rulers of ministers. Numerous are the texts, Biblical or notes on the Biblical texts, which refer to rulers as gods. "For so, often times the Scripture calleth the mightie men of the worlde".[36] In fact, the word "god" can be applied to "an excellent persone",[37] to the warriors of Israel who smote the Egyptians,[38] to judges,[39] and to princes or anyone in authority, for "a certaine image of God appeareth in those that excel in vertue, aucthoritie, and religion, for which causes they be called Gods".[40] Clearly, the word "gods" applies to "Princes and rulers, who for their

---

31. See Exod. 4:16.

32. See G.V., Exod. 7:1.

33. Ibid.

34. B.V., Exod. 7:1, n. (a).

35. See G.V., Exod. 7:1, n. (a).

36. G.V., Exod. 15:11, n. (f).

37. So is the word "gods" glossed in the following verse: "I saw gods ascending up out of the earth": G.V., 1 Sam. 28:13.

38. "... these are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues ...": 1 Sam. 4:8.

39. In the following verse: "Thou shalt not rayle vpon the goddes", the word "goddes" is glossed as "iudges": see B.V., Exod. 22:27 and gloss.

office sake are called gods, and are made here in earth as his Lieutenants".[41] Indeed, this is used as an argument to claim divinity for Christ: "Wherefore if this noble title be giuen to man, muche more it apperteined to him that is the Sonne of God equal with his Father".[42]

If the person and authority of the ruler or of anyone in office is so sacred, one might expect to discover that the irreverence shown or the wrong done against them will be as grievous as if the wrong was done to God himself, and that these evils may be described in the terms used to define the wrongs done against God himself. And so we find that "he that contemneth Gods ministers contemneth God him self";[43] that he that resisteth God's minister resists God himself;[44] that he that murmurs against him murmurs against God himself;[45] that God will afflict them that afflict his ministers.[46] The same is applicable to magistrates.[47] In fact, one may be guilty of blasphemy against those in authority. The order is explicit on that point. "Thou shalt not rayle vpon the goddes, nyther blaspheme the ruler of the people"[48] for they ought "to be praised with

---

40. B.V. Ps. 136:2, T.H., n. (a). So does the word "gods" in the following verse: "Confesse you (it) vnto the God of gods ...": see B.V., Ps. 136:2, T.H. See also B.V., Ps. 138:1, T.H. n. (a).

41. G.V., John 10:34, n. (n).

42. Ibid..

43. G.V., Exod. 16:8, n. (e).

44. See Exod. 23:21. The homily on disobedience and wilful rebellion qualifies those in authority as God's Lieutenants, God's Presidents, God's Officers, God's Commissioners, God's Judges, ordained of God himself: see Frank. B. Fieler, Tamburlaine, Part I and Its Audience (University of Florida Monographs, Humanities, No. 8, Gainesville, Florida, 1961), p. 13. See also Watson, op. cit., n. 15, p. 83.

45. " ... your murmurings are not against vs, but against the Lord": G.V., Exod. 16:8.

46. See Exod. 23:22.

47. B.V., Exod. 22:27, n. (o).

48. B.V., Exod. 22:27. Marlowe includes this notion of blasphemy against the king-god: see 2T. 4.3.52.

all feare and reuerence".[49] For it is possible to blaspheme against God and the king.[50] The sacred character of the king is unquestionable by Biblical standards. The divine and the secular aspects of rule merge in the person of the king.

One may rightly assume that much of the greatness and majesty of the English monarch at the time of Marlowe was derived from the sacred character invested upon him by the Biblical concepts of the king. The most direct proof of this may be found in Whetstones's The English Myrror which, incidentally, is alleged to have been a main source used by Marlowe for his Tamburlaine.[51] Whetstones, who judges that "a king ... is the most soueraigne title, that euer God gaue vnto man",[52] extols royal dignity in the following words:

> For all honor is contained in this word king. This name king, was held of so great reverence among the people of many nations, as the Indians and the Persians worshiped their kings as deuine Idols, and held the incounter happie if by chance they saw their king.[53]

Whetstones further notes that

> in auncient times kings ... also tooke charge of the Sacrifices and Ceremonies (...) which prooueth that kings are sacred, and who so euer layeth violent hands vppon them, cannot but bee guiltie of Irreligion.[54]

---

49. G.V., Exod. 15:11, n. (g).

50. "Thou didst blaspheme God and the King": 1 Kgs. 21:10. See also G.V., 2 Chr. 32:16, n. (k).

51. See above, pp. 101 ff. See also Fieler, op. cit., n. 44, p. 9, n. 1.

52. See Whetstones, op. cit., n. 18, pp. 53; see also pp. 113 and 201.

53. Whetstones, op. cit., n. 18, pp. 201-202. On kings considered as gods, see Thomas Adams, The White Devill or The Hypocrite vncased ...: The Leaven or A Direction to Heaven (London, 1615), p. 105. See also Henry King, A Sermon preached at Pavls Crosse, the 25. of November 1621 ... (London, 1621), p. 36. On a similar belief of the Goths, see George Abbot, An Exposition vpon the Prophet Ionah (London, 1600), p. 432. See also Watson, op. cit., n. 15, pp. 84 and 85. See also above, p. 219 and n. 401; p. 222.

54. Whetstones, op. cit., n. 18, p. 203. See also Watson, op. cit., n. 15, pp. 83-84.

Irreverence or wrong done against a king is judged as follows:

> God annoynteth kinges (as the visible images of him) with the semblable maiestye: concerning temporall worship, he calleth them gods, and S. Paule saith, he that resisteth the ordinaunce of the kinge resisteth the ordinaunce of God (Rom. 13). He then that striueth to depose his naturall king, and to exalt a straunger committeth earthly idolatry, in likewise as the worshippers of false Gods commit spirituall.[55]

Here, as in the Bible, offences against the king are described in terms used to design offences against God. The spiritual entity of the king is not far removed from the divine essence of God himself. Thus, Usumcasane's remark would surely evoke the lofty position of royalty in Tudor England, a position sustained by a Scriptural background. Indeed, to be a Tudor monarch was "halfe to be a God."

It stands to reason that a king was godly in the measure that he exercised his authority in conformity with God's laws. By reversing the structure in his reply to Usumcasane's remark, Theridamas shifts the emphasis from the king-god entity to that of the practical benefits to be derived as a king and possibly to the duties incurred by one in that office. He says: "A God is not so glorious as a King" (1T. 2.5.57). This answer might be expected of a Moslem speaking for a Christian audience. Theridamas is obviously more fascinated by the tangible and earthly glories of a king than by the unseen spiritual assets of a god. The "kingly joyes in earth" (1T. 2.5.59) outweigh by far the pleasures the gods may enjoy in heaven (1T. 2.5.58). Theridamas's Moslem earthliness would quite naturally respond to the earthly "kingly joyes". What are these? Theridamas outlines them as follows:

> To weare a Crowne enchac'd with pearle and golde,
> whose vertues carie with it life and death.
> To aske, and have: commaund, and be obeied.
> When looks breed love, with lookes to gaine the prize.
> Such power attractive shines in princes eies.
> (1T. 2.5.60-64)

---

55. Whetstones, op. cit., n. 18, p. 116.

Theridamas lists the benefits of a crown in terms of wordly wealth, power, and prestige. He is orientated exclusively towards material values and excludes all spiritual dimensions from the office of a king. Tamburlaine, in the words of his closest colleague and friend Theridamas, means to be a king on his own human and earthly terms; one may deduce that, equally, he means to deify himself on his own equally earthly terms. What significance would this have on an Elizabethan audience? Tamburlaine, obviously through his spokesman Theridamas, has rejected all spiritual dimensions and, therefore, all obligations and responsibilities to any other presence but his own. Consequently, by Christian and Biblical standards, Tamburlaine can no longer say of himself that to be a king is half to be a god. Tamburlaine is king only; his kingship is confined exclusively to its earthly significance. Tamburlaine openly confirms his stand when he extols

> . . . . . the ripest fruit of all,
> That perfect blisse and sole felicitie,
> The sweet fruition of an earthly crowne.
> (1T. 2.7.27-29).

According to Tamburlaine, accession to the crown is the summum bonum of human achievement. By these lines Tamburlaine declares the winning side of the debate on the kingly-versus-godly values of the crown and clearly asserts his position in favour of material gains. This anticlimax to Tamburlaine's glowing description of his aspirations as man has been another source of perplexity for Marlovian scholars[56] and, for this reason, deserves to be examined before resuming the study of Tamburlaine's self-glorification.

---

56. Fieler says this about Tamburlaine's aspirations to an earthly crowne: to the Elizabethans, "the bold assertion that an earthly objective was the highest reach of man's aspirations would come with the shock of an obscenity in church": op. cit.,n.44,p.16. Might not Marlowe instead be putting these words on the lips of his hero to express an aspiration totally in keeping with his character, his background,and the mission he is to accomplish?

Critics have described this line as typical of Marlowe's irony, undercutting spiritual values in one sweep in favour of materialistic ones.[57] In reality, Marlowe may simply have been voicing through this line some of the cynical scorn he could have had for the exaggerated cult of the Tudor sovereigns, and perhaps, for Elizabeth in particular.[58] After all, he knew better than many what doing special service for the Queen could entail.[59] One can hardly imagine an objective mind like his to have fallen under the spell of the Elizabethan mystique attached to the crown. Furthermore, one must remember that nowhere in his works does Marlowe rhapsodize on the virtues and the prestige of Elizabeth. There are no divine attributes attached to the crown at least in Tamburlaine's world. It is an earthly diadem, so earthly that the dramatist cannot refrain from making it have a taste of this earth in the hole Mycetes digs up to hide it. Like the hidden talent of the Bible,[60] Mycetes's crown was doomed to a sterility of the kind expected from purely earthly benefits. Marlowe was also aware that the strength of a crown lay, to a large extent, in the human qualities of the man wearing it and that the spiritual or divine"half" of the king could not compensate for the human deficiencies of the man wearing the crown. Mycetes was a proof of this fact. Wit and military power were the securities upon which kingship could rest and Tamburlaine means to have both before wearing the much coveted diadem.

In addition to this, if one remembers the Moslem background of Tamburlaine, if one grasps the direction that Tamburlaine's spiritual peregrination is taking, could Tamburlaine wear a crown other than earthly? Historically, Tamburlaine

---

57. See Kocher, op. cit., n. 1, pp. 76 ff.

58. Marlowe might also have been undermining to some extent some of the exaggerated cult which his contemporaries had for Tamburlaine, the man, even though he had unwittingly served the cause of the Western Christian powers.

59. See above, pp. 3 and 6.

60. See the parable of the talents in Matt. 25:14-30.

was a descendant of Ismael,[61] the branch of Abraham's descendants destined to rule the earth as opposed to Isaac's posterity who were promised they would inherit the heavenly blessings.[62] The Elizabethans were well aware of this fact. As a descendant of Ismael, Tamburlaine could aspire to nothing greater than an earthly crown. After all, perhaps Marlowe meant to evoke by his phrase, "the sweet fruition of an earthly crown", the "earthly fruits" promised to the line of Ismael. By the same token Tamburlaine was a descendant of Esau, of the line of Abraham to whom had been promised earthly blessings. Tamburlaine's mission was akin to that of Esau whose first duty was to wage war, for God had told him: "And by thy sword shalt thou live ..."[63] As a Moslem, Tamburlaine's first and foremost duty was the same as Esau's: he was to live by the sword. This function confirmed once more the earthliness of Tamburlaine's mission.

From the Christian point of view, Tamburlaine belonged to some form of the Islamic religion even though that form does not appear to have been that of the orthodox Sunnites.[64] Accordingly Moslems were heathens and, therefore, barred from heaven. Their Islamic doctrine had been inspired by the devil and could never lead to heavenly beatitude. Furthermore, Moslems took pride in the secular aspect of their religion. For them, to attend to the affairs of this world, to organize one's assets and resources: all this was in keeping with the practice of their faith and was even an integral part of it.[65] Islam was essentially geared to earthly rewards both in this world and in the next. If one remembers the materialistic and sensual delights of their heaven, then their bliss in Christian terms could not go beyond the highest earthly joys, not excluding those of an earthly crown.

---

61. See above, pp. 147 ff. and p. 147, n. 33.

62. See above, pp. 170-171 and p. 170, n. 138.

63. Gen. 27:40.

64. See above, pp. 215 ff. and 220 ff.

65. See G.-C. Anawati, Mystique musulmane: Aspects et tendances - Experiences et techniques (Paris, 1961), p. 17.

If, by Christian standards, Moslems were earthly, idolatrous, heathens, and infidels, Marlowe had no choice but to make those traits evident in his hero if his play was to be a success. If one's lofty aspirations normally anticipated the possession of the crown, this crown had to be bereft of any spiritual significance. Tamburlaine's option for "an earthly crown" barred him from the heavenly regions. How does this option modify his aspirations to be "immortall like the Gods" (1T. 1.2.201), in other words, to be a god? Because Tamburlaine has discarded all but the strictly earthly attributes of the crown, he can no longer lay any claims to be the representative of God according to the Christian sense of a king. He, therefore, may become no more than a falsified representative or image of God or, in other words, an idol. The Biblical authors and, therefore, the Elizabethans, were aware of the possibility of this evil. The "gods of Egypt" upon whom God plans to execute judgment[66] are glossed as "princes or idoles".[67] The only way open for Tamburlaine self-deification is that of becoming an idol, the image of a false god, or a false image of God.

Tamburlaine's deification is in essence a growth in the identification of himself with some god, partly with the god of war. Just as some Oriental religions preach that heavenly bliss is to be found in the absorption of the self by the Great One, just as the Pauline doctrine presents as a spiritual goal the identification of one's self with Christ,[68] a very common theme in the Christian tradition, so, in the play, does Tamburlaine move towards an identification with the god of war. However, the god of war is a god among other gods, and is, therefore, but an idol. Tamburlaine's spiritual growth, therefore,

---

66. "... and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment" : Exod. 2:12.

67. See G.V., Exod. 12:12, gloss. "... vpon their gods also the Lord did execucion"; G.V., Num. 33:4. The following note explains the word "gods" as "theyr idols, or their chiefe rulers"; see B.V., Num. 33:4, n. (e).

68. See Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21.

moves towards a oneness with the god of war or with an idol. In keeping with the context of war in the play, Tamburlaine's identification with the idol is brought about through rivalry and strife by which the superior of the two will, in time, supplant the other. As Tamburlaine's rivalry with his antagonist, the god of war, intensifies, the likeness between the two becomes more pronounced until the one merges into the other, apparently at least.

The theme of this rivalry between Tamburlaine and the god of war, as well as other gods, runs through the play. From the very first Theridamas finds that Tamburlaine's "looks do menace heaven and dare the Gods" (1T. 1.2.157). His word in an oath is worth any oath sworn by the gods as witnesses of his vow (1T. 1.2.233-234). He plans wars which "shall threat the Gods more than Cyclopian warres" (1T. 2.3.21). Upon learning of Tamburlaine's treachery, Cosroe wonders what Tamburlaine means to do as he aspires to "dare the force of angrie Jupiter" (1T. 2.6.4), the equivalent of a warring god. Cosroe begs the stars:

> Direct my weapon to his barbarous heart,
> That thus opposeth him against the Gods,
> And scornes the Powers that governe Persea.
> (1T. 2.6.38-40)

Once Tamburlaine has the crown in possession, he resolves to wear it, "though Mars himselfe the angrie God of armes" (1T. 2.7.58) should wish to dispossess him of this diadem (1T. 2.7.60). He would "make Jove to stoope" (1T. 4.4.74). His warfare "countermands the Gods" (1T. 5.1.233), forces the God of war to resign his place to him (1T. 5.1.450) and makes Jove look pale and wan for fear of him (1T. 5.1.452-453). Such is the impact of Tamburlaine's warfare on the gods in the first part of the play. Tamburlaine's rivalry and hostility against the gods grew in intensity in the second part of the play. According to Theridamas, he "makes the mighty God of armes his slave"(2T. 3.4.53). Calyphas's defection makes Tamburlaine ready to levy power against Jove, so that Jove trembles and hides from Tamburlaine (2T. 4.1.130-131). Later Tamburlaine interprets his illness as an attack on the part of spiritual powers (2T. 5.3.9, 13-14, 36), of gods who seek "to conquer mighty Tamburlaine" (2T. 5.3.43). He

plans to "march against the powers of heaven" (2T. 5.3.48), to carry out "the slaughter of the Gods" (2T.5.3. 50), and "to war against the Gods, / That thus envie the health of Tamburlaine" (2T. 5.3.52-53). As Tamburlaine marches from victory to victory, he spreads his rule on the face of the earth. At the same time, his presence invades the spiritual regions of the gods until he claims he is too big for this universe (2T. 4.1.119-120). His presence transcends the physical or the material world and overtakes the realms of the gods.

If the nature of aspirations are the measure of the man driven by them, then Tamburlaine's victories promote a growing resemblance between him and the gods, especially the god of arms. Tamburlaine, in fact, is recognized as a deity by both friend and foe. He is referred to as a "God of war" (1T. 5.1.1) by the Governor of Damascus, as an "earthly God" (2T. 1.3.138; 3.5.22) by his colleague Techelles and by his enemy Orcanes. Needless to say that all through this process of deification, Tamburlaine has become more and more the ruthless tyrant[69] whose will is rule absolute (1T. 3.3.41) and who is believed to have been "sent from hell to tyrannise on earth" (2T. 5.1.111). The language shows that as Tamburlaine challenges and defeats his successive foes, that is, Mycetes, Cosroe, Bajazet, the Soldan, Orcanes, and Callapine in real life situations on the battlefield, there is another range of warfare being carried on at another level. As Tamburlaine accumulates victories on earth, he claims he is invading the heavens. Since only a god can adequately face another god, Tamburlaine's rivalry with the gods somewhat promotes him to a deity similar to that of his antagonists. whether his antagonists are real or imaginary, the effect on Tamburlaine is the same. He is gradually moving towards self-deification. Does the action in the play contribute anything or illustrate in any way this gradual transformation of Tamburlaine into an idol?

---

69. See 1T. 3.2.102; 4.2.7; 4.4.22, 102; 5.1.404; 2T. 4.3.54, 77; 5.1.133; 5.2.18, 55.

There are a few incidents which seem to highlight this process. The first time Tamburlaine appears on the stage, he dramatically discards his shepherd's weeds and reveals himself in a resplendent suit of armour, a change which symbolizes Tamburlaine's call to a new vocation in life, or a new phase in his career. The sight of Tamburlaine as a full-fledged warrior is compelling enough to convince his audience, among whom are the newly-captured Egyptians, of the likelihood that he might bring about all the conquests he has been outlining in order to impress them (1T. 1.2). In view of the godly figure he is supposed to have according to Menaphon's description of him (1T. 2.1.7-30), one might say that Tamburlaine, the warrior, as he appears in this scene, is virtually to some extent already a god of war.

The scene of the martial banquet is another milestone in the deification of the hero. A new Tamburlaine appears in this scene. He has moved strides towards universal rule; his word is law and his will admits no obstacles or resistance of any sort. As a victor over Bajazet, he is now a mighty king taking over the rule of the mighty Turk. This victory merits a special celebration, a martial banquet. Tamburlaine, all in scarlet (1T. 4.4.s.d), presides over this special feast. One already senses that an aura of the divine, however false, hovers over Tamburlaine. The solemnity of the occasion, the dedication of the "full bowles of wine unto the God of war" (1T. 4.4.6), the distribution of crowns, symbolic of the fruits of their recent battles, make of Tamburlaine a kind of god-to-be, a sort of intermediary or mediatorial figure between his followers and the God of war in whose service they all are. Tamburlaine, in this scene, seems to act as a delegate of the divine God of war honoured by these festivities.[70]

Allusions and situations point to the fact that he is treated and considered more and more as a deity. Early in the play, Techelles had anticipated the sight of kings kneeling at Tamburlaine's feet (1T. 1.2.55). Later Tamburlaine warns

---

70. For a more detailed analysis of this scene see below, pp. 422 ff.

Cosroe: "The world will strive with hostes of men at armes, / To swarme unto the Ensigne I support" (1T. 2.3.13-14). These visions into the future imply that Tamburlaine will possess an extraordinary power on the battlefield as a military leader and on the world at large as an irresistible presence which will draw everyone to his ideals of war symbolized by his ensign. Is this a reflection of Mahomet who makes of himself an idol "and draws mankind to Mecha for his sake"? Tamburlaine is already more akin to a god than to a man. His powers of destruction extend into the spiritual realm of individuals; they destroy even the will to live in his enemies. Bajazet, Zabina, Agydas all kill themselves. Whetstones, at one point, alludes to the extraordinary cult the Turks held for their emperor. He says that they "so reuerence their Emperors commaundements as they execute themselues, if their Emperour pronounce the sentence".[71] Marlowe has included a scene reflecting this cult. Tamburlaine, the emperor, answers to such a description. Agydas, who is discovered by Tamburlaine while trying to persuade Zenocrate to return to her Arabian prince and, thereby, to be unfaithful to Tamburlaine, is compelled to execute upon himself the sentence he has read in Tamburlaine's "killing frownes" (1T. 3.2.91). Agydas knows there is no remission or clemency to be hoped for from the despotic will of Tamburlaine, the new king of Persia. Superior powers guide and rule Tamburlaine against which Agydas feels helpless; he, therefore, kills himself. Persian kings were revered as gods in the sixteenth century.

The theme of sacrifices, the expression of a cult for a divine being, makes its occasional appearance in the play, first in connection with Bajazet (1T. 4.2.16 ff.), later with the Virgins of Damascus (1T. 5.1.64 ff.),[72] and finally with the death of Calyphas (2T. 4.1.120 ff.). The Virgins of Damascus formulate their plea to Tamburlaine in the form of a prayer addressed to a "sacred Emperour" (1T. 5.1.99). One might easily suppose that "the prostrate service of this

---

71. Op. cit., n. 18, p. 202.

72. See above, pp. 271 ff. and 277 ff. and notes.

wretched towne" (1T. 5.1.100), represented by the Virgins in supplication before Tamburlaine, was similar to that of slaves kissing the gound or grovelling in the presence of Oriental despots.[73] The episode of the Virgins of Damascus suggests that they are propitiatory victims sacrificed to appease the wrathful god-tyrant Tamburlaine. Thus, the martial banquet and the slaying of the Virgins of Damascus are more than just episodes in the action of the play. These scenes bear their weight in the drama only when they are perceived in the light of their religious significance. They could be, in truth, first and foremost, religious incidents. The second part of the play also has its religious moments, as we shall see.

Tamburlaine pursues his campaigns in all directions, either through his delegated warriors, Usumcasane, Techelles, and Theridamas, or directly against the Turkish Orcanes. Tamburlaine kills and destroys with a Molochian insatiety until the scene of the slashing of his arm. This scene again offers to the audience some insight into what the identity of Tamburlaine might be. This incident is a notable milestone in the gradual self-deification of the hero. It appears in the play as a part of Tamburlaine's teaching on the "rudiments of war" (2T. 3.2.54). He is trying to impress the timorous Calyphas who finds Tamburlaine's techniques of assaults dangerous and who is afraid of being slain or wounded before he has even properly learned his father's methods of waging war and appreciated the glories of warfare. At this point, Tamburlaine is suddenly aware that his teaching on the risks to be incurred on the battlefields is not quite convincing. Tamburlaine lacks the proof to support his teaching for he has emerged from his campaigns "round about the earth / Quite voide of skars, and cleare from any wound" (2T. 3.2.111-112). He must bring home to his son the truth that his fears are futile and trivial, and show him how he should scorn the discomfort of wounds. This Tamburlaine does by boldly and ruthlessly

---

73. See Knolles, op. cit., n. 21, p. 194.

inflicting a wound upon himself in order that he may teach his observers that "A wound is nothing be it nere so deepe" (2T. 3.2.114). One may note immediately that Tamburlaine will fail in his efforts to teach Calyphas. Is this incident meant to be indicative of a weakness in Tamburlaine, the god of war, a weakness similar to that of Mahomet the idol in precisely the same areas of warfare in which they both should most succeed? Tamburlaine goes on to boast: "Now look I like a souldier" (2T. 3.2.117). Indeed, he implies that a soldier could hardly be imagined without the marks which prove his valour. Scars are necessary to witness to the genuineness of a true warrior. By boldly slashing his arm, Tamburlaine can now personify the ideally dedicated man-at-arms of the battlefield.

However, Tamburlaine's lines following the slashing of his arm seem to suggest yet greater dimensions to his self-inflicted wound, dimensions which imply godly and royal glamour. Tamburlaine can find no better expressions to illustrate the glory of his wound than those related to the royal state. After having affirmed that "Blood is the God of Wars rich livery" (2T. 3.2.116), Tamburlaine goes on explaining what his self-inflicted wound means to him:

> . . . . . this wound [is]
> As great a grace and majesty to me,
> As if a chaire of gold enamiled,
> Enchac'd with Diamondes, Saphyres, Rubies
> And fairest pearle of welthie India
> Were mounted here under a Canapie:
> And I sat downe, cloth'd with the massie robe,
> That late adorn'd the Affrike Potentate.
> (2T. 3.2.117-124)

Liveries, canopied thrones, and robes speak of the royal authority of a king. By extension, these symbols evoke the king-god relationship explained before[74] by which the king somewhat becomes the incarnation of divine authority. In the measure that the king exercises his rule in conformity with the laws of the God he represents, the king-God relationship may move towards the identification of

---

74. See above, pp. 357 ff.

the two. This virtual identification of the king with God was at the root of the king-god equation which transformed the king into a divine character or a god. Tamburlaine's words seem to suggest a parallel. Instead of a king-God relationship which previously was to him of no interest whatever,[75] Tamburlaine suggests a Tamburlaine-God of war relationship on the basis of the virtues of war. To him, the glories of his wound are as great and glamorous as royal majesty. As the anointing ceremony is meant to consecrate a human and confirm his role in the king-god relationship, so does the self-inflicted wound, as it were, consecrate Tamburlaine as the incarnate form of the God of war. There is this major difference, however. The more perfect the king, the greater the movement towards an identification with God and the more God-like he may become. This theory was fully in conformity with the Christian tradition. On the contrary, Tamburlaine's transformation into the divine can move only in the opposite direction. The greater he becomes as a warrior, the greater the identification of Tamburlaine with the God of war or with an idol. Thus, this self-inflicted wound is the seal of Tamburlaine's self-deification or of Tamburlaine's self-transformation into a god or an idol. Tamburlaine, like Mahomet, has made of himself a god,[76] a god of his own religion of war. Tamburlaine's "Wil" and "Shall" in the first part of the play (1T. 3.3.41) should perhaps be understood, to some extent at least, as the divine "Will" and "Shall" of a god of war.

The Elizabethans were probably quick to detect the idolatrous connotations attached to this scene. In view of what has been said about the evil of cutting one's own flesh to honour the dead, or a god, in connection with the customs of Mahomet's priests,[77] one may now conclude that Tamburlaine has himself indulged

---

75. See above, pp. 361 ff.

76. See above, p. 352.

77. See above, pp. 271 ff.

in one of the most objectionable idolatrous practices mentioned in the Bible. Tamburlaine is now as guilty of idolatry as were the priests of Mahomet earlier in the play. He has resorted to the same means of honouring his god of war, or himself, as those priests used to honour Mahomet. Tamburlaine, the idol, is now guilty of idolatry and bears the physical mark of this evil. The Elizabethans knew the full significance of such a mark. The Scriptures had taught them about the abominations of which Jehoiakim, one of the kings of Israel, had been guilty. The marks, found on him after his death, had been described as "the markes of idolatrie"[78] or as "superstitious markes which ... declared how depely idolatrie was rooted in his heart, seing he bare the markes in his flesh".[79] Such a mark also recalled that of Cain, "the visible sign of evil".[80] The moral significance of Tamburlaine's wound could be as evil as those just mentioned or even as evil as a devil's mark which Faustus inflicts upon himself during the signing of his pact with Mephistopheles.[81] The shedding of blood in such circumstances had the binding force of merging the identity of the signer of the pact with the one receiving it. The mark became a kind of consecration, indelibly inscribed in the flesh of the participant.[82] As Faustus became virtually a devil at that moment, so did Tamburlaine become an idol[83] when he slashed his arm supposedly in honour of the God of war, or of himself. Is it any wonder that insults made to Tamburlaine should subsequently be referred to as blasphemy (2T. 4.3.50-52)?

The presence of Tamburlaine the idol in the play is implicitly restated in the scene of the burning of the Koran. If Mahomet made an idol of himself

---

78. B.V., 2Chr. 36:8, n. (a).

79. G.V., 2Chr. 36:8, n. (d).

80. Gen. 4:15.

81. See DF. line 443.

82. Barbara Rosen says this on the subject: "The shedding of blood is ... explicitly an offering to the object of one's worship according to the Old Testament custom": Witchcraft (London, 1969), p. 17. This kind of mark could be a sort of stigmata, a sign of divine approval or even a mock baptism: see ibid., p. 18.

83. See below, pp. 374 ff.

and if Mahomet's principal means of living his idolized identity was by waging war, might he not be considered as another incarnation of the god of war? Tamburlaine claims to be superior to Mahomet on the grounds of his successful campaigns carried out in spite of Mahomet. Tamburlaine translates the significance of his warfare with the Turks in terms of a personal defiance of Mahomet in which he proves himself more powerful than the founder of Islam. If Mahomet is some sort of god of war, then Tamburlaine is a greater one. In view of the helplessness of Mahomet, Tamburlaine's status as a reincarnation of the god of war is fully instated.

Thus the gradual change of Tamburlaine into an idol seems to be part of the structure of the play. If this is so, the nature of Tamburlaine's action in the play might be expected to evolve correspondingly. Critics agree that Tamburlaine's warfare increases in intensity as the play moves on and as factors which could tend to attenuate or deter Tamburlaine from his single-purposed dedication are gradually eliminated from the scene. As Agydas, Zenocrate, Calyphas disappear from the play, Tamburlaine becomes more totally involved in war. He moves towards a genuinely complete dedication to warfare. Theridamas, who is trying to impress Olympia with his own worth in relation to his master, depicts Tamburlaine as a triumphant god of war in a processional cortege complete with war trophies, with a retinue of vanquished slaves, attendants, escorts, all heralded by the feathered figure of Fame. In this progress, Tamburlaine treads Fortune underneath his feet (2T. 3.4.52); the mighty god of arms is his companion slave (2T. 3.4.53); death and the Fatal Sisters wait on him "With naked swords and scarlet liveries" (2T. 3.4.54-55). Rhamnusia leads the march providing gruesome but apt tokens of homage to the new god of war. She carries a helmet full of blood and strews the path of the procession with the brains of slaughtered men (2T. 3.4.57-58). Tamburlaine is escorted by the ugly Furies ready to plague the world (2T. 3.4.59-60) at his least beck and call. Tamburlaine is parading in his full power, completely master of his destiny. The agents of strife and war of the pagan mythological world, the Goddess of Fortune, Mars, the god of

war, the Fatal Sisters, "sister-goddesses who presided over the birth and life of men";[84] Rhamnusia, the goddess of vengeance,[85] the Furies or "the avenging deities of Greek and Roman mythology",[86] are either subjected to Tamburlaine or at his command and service. No more does

> ... a chair of gold enamiled,
> Enchac'd with Diamondes, Saphyres, Rubies,
> And fairest pearle of welthie India.
> ... mounted here under a Canapie,
> (2T. 3.2.119-122)

the comparison used to describe the glory of Tamburlaine's wound immediately after the slashing of his arm, adequately express the grace and majesty of Tamburlaine, the god of war. The language of royal pomp is transferred into the realm of the gods. According to Theridamas, Tamburlaine now needs a canopy from the spiritual regions of these gods to honour him as a king-god. Fame, "cloth'd in windy aire, / And Eagles wings join'd to her feathered breast" (2T. 3.4.61-62), assumes the role. She hovers over Tamburlaine's head proclaiming through her golden trumpet that "The name of mightie Tamburlain is spread" (2T. 3.4.66) through the vast expanse of the heavens, supposedly into the regions of the gods. Tamburlaine is the new god of war whom gods and goddesses must honour.

Critics have judged that Tamburlaine's cruelty becomes more savage and barbarous as the play progresses, especially in the second part of the play. He seems to become totally devoid of any feelings of pity or humaneness. Could this be explained by the fact that as Tamburlaine's deification takes place, he is gradually dehumanized and somewhat transformed into the essence of a god of war discarding meanwhile in himself any traits or elements which could be alien

---

84. See John D. Jump, ed., Tamburlaine the Great: Parts I and II (University of Nebraska, 1967), p. 21, n.

85. See ibid., p. 31,n.

86. See ibid., p. 43, n.

to the nature of a war deity? Could it mean as well that Tamburlaine's deification is tantamount to becoming a devil?[87] Towards the end of his career, Tamburlaine describes himself as the image of the god whose will he executes in his barbarous activities (2T. 4.1.148 ff.). As he has submerged himself in strife, Tamburlaine's humanity has become distorted to the point that the mere sight of him is sufficient to put whole armies to flight (2T. 5.3.115). Tamburlaine's physical traits have degenerated to the monstrous image of the idol of warfare. As may be expected, Tamburlaine's helplessness as an idol will increase until his feeble nature as a man collapses and brings an end to his life and career. No heavenly joys can be foreseen for this powerless idol in the throes of death. Intimations that Tamburlaine is on his way to heaven would have been totally incompatible with the transformation that he has undergone, with the fact that he is a Moslem, and with the beliefs of the Christian audience witnessing and understanding the Scythian's gradual but undeniable degeneration.

We have thus studied the process by which Tamburlaine develops into the god, or deity, which is meant to set down the basic principles of the religion of war apparently elaborated in the play. Nevertheless, the nature of Tamburlaine remains two dimensional. He is a god of war incarnate and man at the same time. This makes Tamburlaine equally object and subject of this cult. As subject of this religion of war, he determines and imposes his set of norms and standards. Into what form does his religion of war develop? Does it suggest that of Mahomet?

---

87. Tamburlaine is referred to as a devil: see 1T. 4.1.42; as a "divelish shepheard": see 1T. 2.6.1; as a "divelish thiefe": see 1T. 2.6.20; as a "Feend": see 1T. 2.6.15.

II

The study of a religion of any kind supposes an analysis of its various constituent parts. The nature of its tenets, the sources from which it springs must be defined. The norms of behaviour governing the practice of such a cult, the ideals proposed to its adepts, the set of virtues to be lived by and the priority of values which determine moral choices, all of which are part of the ethics of any religion, must be outlined. The doctrines instilled in its new recruits must be examined as the teaching in such circumstances normally represents the most substantial and the most meaningful aspects of the theory supporting a set religious structure. Finally, the manner in which the doctrinal theory is translated into the style of life of its followers must be assessed. All of these aspects of Tamburlaine's religion of war must be studied if one is to understand Tamburlaine the man as well as his divine presence in the play. The meaning of war as the principal component of Tamburlaine's religion, its purpose, its religious and ethical values, all of these points must be examined on their own as well as against the cultural and religious background in which they were set.

One prevalent doctrine in the sixteenth century was that of an existing cosmic order which was to be reflected and reproduced in the social order of the time[88] as well as in man as an individual. The celestial hierarchy was reproduced and reflected in the social order. The king was the apex of the pyramidal structure of society[89] and each successive social stratum was to keep its position in the general hierarchical framework for the sake of order in the whole system. The macrocosmic structure of the universe was mirrored in the microcosm of man. The balance of the four basic elements of earth, fire, water,

---

88. See Fieler, op. cit., n. 44, pp. 11-12.

89. See Watson, op. cit., n. 15, p. 83; see also Fieler, op. cit., n. 44, p. 13.

and air in man had to be carefully preserved if his health was to be sound.[90] The preservation of the balance of these four elements, therefore, supposed some kind of strife perpetually present in order to prevent any one element from becoming predominant over the others. Strife thus appeared as the necessary condition for the preservation of life and harmony.

The idea of a necessary strife could have been derived from various sources. An opposition set in nature by God himself was explained in the Bible. The Book of Ecclesiasticus describes life in terms of good against evil, of life against death, of the goodly against the sinner, and of the ungodly against the faithful.[91] The author of this book summarizes the situation in these words: "Behold, these are the workes of the hyghest, and there are euen two agaynst two, and one set agaynst another".[92] The commentator elaborates on the fact that cosmic harmony can be understood only in terms of strife and discord. He says:

> Because of the contrary qualities which kepeth the vniversal harmonie of al thynges, one counteruaylyng another in number, weight, and measure or els would one geattying the gouernement, destroy al the reast: so that colde dooth temper the heate, moysture the drouth, lightnesse, heauinesse, brightnesse, darkenesse, and contrarywyse, so that al thyngs doo stande of concorde and discorde.[93]

Discord was thus an essential factor for the preservation of all things. The New Testament also comments on the presence of strife in human nature. Sixteenth-century annotations attempted to elucidate the matter. James explains strife as an earthly, sensual, and devilish part of our being.[94] According to the annotator, this strife springs from the law of the members continuously

---

90. See Fieler, op. cit., n. 44, p. 22.

91. See G.V., B.V., Ecclus. 33:13.

92. B.V., Ecclus. 33:14.

93. B.V., Ecclus. 33:14, n. (c).

94. See Jas. 3:16.

fighting against the law of the mind.[95] Strife was thus a matter of discord between matter and spirit, in which spirit was to be the victor if excellence was to be achieved. Thus, by Biblical standards as well, strife and discord were basic to nature in its raw and unredeemed state. Greville, one of Marlowe's contemporaries, reflects similar views on the subject:

> Now as the Warres proue man's mortality;
> So doe the oppositions here below,
> Of elements, the contrariety,
> Of constellations, which aboue doe show,
> Of qualities in flesh, will in the spirits:
> Principles, of discord not of concord, made:
> All proue God meant not man should here inherit,
> A time-made World, which with Time should not fade.[96]

Strife in this world was meant to direct our attention beyond this world, a direction quite the opposite to the one Tamburlaine is led to choose as a result of this strife.

There was still the problem that some individuals did not stay in their place in the hierarchical structure of society. The fact that some did rise above others in spite of the belief in the validity of the social order and of the efforts made to preserve it, had to be accounted for. Neoplatonists came to the rescue by saying that the lighter of the constituent elements governed the spirit, tended to foster aspirations of the mind and caused the individual to rise in spiritual excellence above his peers. Since man was basically, at the same time, an image of God, there was no limit to the aspirations a man could have, nor was there any limit to his ascent, short of becoming the highest God himself. Thus, as the lighter elements tended to predominate, they would work their way upwards carrying with them the soul or spirit and its aspirations to the loftiest heights. Traces of all these concepts about discord and harmony in Nature and man are present in Tamburlaine. This was to be expected in a play whose predominant drive is ambition and whose predominant theme is warfare.

---

95. See B.V., Jas. 4:1, n. (a).

96. See Grosart, ed. cit., n. 9, "A Treatie of Warres", vol. 2, p. 120, stanza 48.

In the first instance, when Tamburlaine's conduct could appear highly objectionable, he uses these concepts to justify his deed. Immediately after he has taken possession of the Persian crown, he explains to the indignant Cosroe the reason why he has behaved in this manner. After he has justified his "thirst of raigne and sweetnes of a crown" (1T. 2.7.12) by claiming that he has followed the example of Jupiter himself who had ousted his father Saturn from his throne (1T. 2.7.12-15) Tamburlaine goes on to say:

> Nature that fram'd us of foure Elements,
> Warring within our breasts for regiment,
> Doth teach us all to have aspyring minds.
> (1T. 2.7.18-20)

According to Tamburlaine, this behaviour is in conformity with divine ethics as well as being rooted in Nature itself. There is hardly anything surprising in this. Contemporary beliefs could support Tamburlaine in his views. But in Tamburlaine's case, there could exist additional assumptions to substantiate and validate his claims. According to general beliefs, Nature and creation were the mirror of God himself. If the same principle holds for Tamburlaine's world, if Tamburlaine is gradually likened to the god of war, and if Nature is to be a mirror of the deity governing it, then necessarily Tamburlaine's world must be one of strife. Strife, discord, and warfare must be rooted in the Nature of a virtual god of war and must be basic to Tamburlaine's religion of war.

Tamburlaine goes on to explain the drive behind his aspirations:

> Our soules . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> Still climing after knowledge infinite,
> And alwaies mooving as the restles Spheares,
> Wills us to weare our selves and never rest,
> (1T. 2.7.14-16)

until the highest aspiration of all on this earth has been reached, that of kingship. Theridamas is quick to support Tamburlaine in his views:

> For he is grosse and like the massie earth,
> That mooves not upwards, nor by princely deeds
> Doth meane to soare above the highest sort.
> (1T. 2.7.31-33)

According to Theridamas, one's spirit should be freed from the weight of the heaviest element, the earth, and made to rise and soar like the air above to the highest regions. The cause of the miserable end of Calyphas is explained in similar terms. Calyphas was "Created of the massy dregges of earth,/ The scum and tartar[97] of the Elements" (2T. 4.1.123-124), and, therefore, is totally incapable of seeking renown, honour, and glory by outstanding human deeds according to the Renaissance concept of honour. Thus the imitation of the gods, strife as an essential trait of Nature, and the rise of the spirit over matter, all these account for Tamburlaine's lofty aspirations and ambitions.

Illness and death are also explained by the theory of elements striving against each other. In the same way that Cosroe's death is explained by the fact that the balance between the four elements in his being has been destroyed (1T. 2.7.46-48), so is Tamburlaine's sudden illness diagnosed. The physician tells him: "Your vaines are full of accidentall heat, / Whereby the moisture of your blood is dried" (2T. 5.3.84-85). The balance between the moisture and the heat or fire in his veins no longer exists. Tamburlaine is, therefore, ill. However, one point of interest here must be noted. The physician somewhat departs from the traditional explanation of illness and death by telling Tamburlaine the fact that "a substance more divine and pure, / Is almost cleane extinguished and spent" (2T. 5.3.88-89) and that this substance can no longer sustain his life. It would seem that this substance divine, perhaps that of a god of war, which has contributed towards the gradual deification of Tamburlaine is just as gradually being used up and, thereby, relegating Tamburlaine down again to his human dimensions only. Tamburlaine's manly stature is taking over his divine nature. Marlowe seems to have adapted the conventional

---

97. U.M. Ellis-Fermor explains "tartar" as "bitartrate of potash". She goes on to say that the word "is generally used in the sixteenth century to describe the dregs of wine or the deposit upon the cask. Hence Tamburlaine's contemptuous figurative use of the word": Tamburlaine the Great in Two Parts (London, 1930), p. 247, n.

explanations about illness and death to suit Tamburlaine's godly nature and mission of warfare. Tamburlaine's divine essence as a god of war is being spent and the human aspect of the nature of Tamburlaine, the dying man, is reasserting its claims to the amazement of Tamburlaine himself: he is suddenly struck with the fact that he is but a man (2T. 5.3.44) and, therefore, doomed to be conquered by death.

Thus, Tamburlaine's belligerent drives and lofty aspirations seem to spring from Nature itself. In this context, Nature may be perceived as a reflection of Tamburlaine's god of war in which conflict and warfare are basic constituents. In the measure that he assumes his role as a warrior and strives more and more to become like the god of war, Tamburlaine may be expected to evolve progressively into the essence of that deity, that is, into the essence of warfare and of strife. Tamburlaine's religion of war springs from the inherent strife and discord lodged within Nature, a mirror of his own divinity which may be perceived from both the subjective and the objective points of view. Tamburlaine is the subject of his religion but, at the same time, the object of this same religious cult. Both tend to merge into one. Strife, viewed in this way, was acceptable to Tambulaine's pagan world, was meaningful to the Biblical as well as to the Christian Neoplatonist's perception of world and man. What were the norms of ethics determining the practice of such a religion?

Whereas, by Biblical and Christian standards, virtue was the crowning glory of the spiritual dimension of man in mastery over his physical nature[98] and while aspirations played an important part in Tamburlaine's career, warfare only could be the sum of Tamburlaine's virtue as will be indicated later. The more did the elements strive for predominance in Tamburlaine's nature, the loftier became his ambitions, the stronger his aspirations, the more powerful

---

98. Lack of control, excess of passion meant that the beastly part of man's nature had prevailed over the nobler instincts of man and, therefore, was the opposite of virtue: see Fieler, op. cit., n.44, p. 18.

became his drives to realize his dreams and, therefore, the more compelling was his need to fight. The essence of Tamburlaine's nature could be translated in no other way than by carrying out war to his utmost capacity if he had any hope of reaching a perfection of some kind. In relation to Tamburlaine's irrepressible drives to wage war, Ellis-Fermor explains that "the fact that this warfare is a part of Nature's purpose and that she gives us so unquestionable evidence of it, teaches us that strife and aspiration should be the law of our spiritual being also".[99] What Ellis-Fermor accepts for all of us is true to an extreme degree in Tamburlaine. In view of the transformation that the character of Tamburlaine undergoes in the play, one could almost conclude that strife is the divine nature of the god of war at work in Tamburlaine's world. In such a context, warfare became a sacred duty as well as a sacred activity. Tamburlaine felt compelled to wage war as an expression of his cult to his self-made god of war and as a means of being true to himself as an image of this god of war.

Marlowe's treatment of the theme of war in the play could complement the Moslem concept of war, a concept familiar to the Elizabethans. Tamburlaine must not be perceived as totally removed from the Moslem world to which he belonged historically in spite of the fact that his legendary image had transformed the historical character considerably. In this Moslem world, wars were a sacred duty. These wars were holy; their victims were martyrs and saints[100] to whom the doors of the Moslem paradise were opened wide upon the death of the Moslem heroes. In fact, the relationships of Islam with the outside world were mostly determined by strife, by the struggle of the faithful against the enemies of Islam.[101] Indeed, "conflict with the infidels was raised

---

99. Ed. cit., p. 112, n.

100. Knolles comments on an engagement between Christians and Turks in which the Christians "slew great numbers of the Turkes, making Mahometane saints and martyrs by heapes for so the Turks account all them whom the Christians kill in their warre": op. cit., n. 21, p. 204.

101. See Thomas W. Arnold, The Islamic Faith (London, 1928), p. 48.

to the level of a religious duty, and was included in the definition of true faith".[102] By Islamic standards, Moslem imperialism divided the world into two parts, one part being governed according to the sacred law of the Koran and the rest of the world peopled by infidels who virtually were meant to submit to the Moslem rule and accept the Islamic law.[103] The dividing line between the two was the battlefront. Theoretically, the whole world was under the banner of warfare, either on the side of the militants out to subdue or on the side of the nations to be subdued.

Obviously, Marlowe was not going to present Tamburlaine's warfare as part of the Moslem militant program. Christian tradition had shed too many Moslem traits from the legendary Tamerlane. Nevertheless, the image of Tamburlaine's warfare appears much like that of Islam. Critics have noted that Tamburlaine's world is also divided into two camps, the one of his colleagues in his world-wide campaigns and the other which has been or will be defeated and subjected to his warring forces. There is no middle way in Tamburlaine's world just as, theoretically at least, there was no middle way in Islam. Therefore, Tamburlaine's warfare is basically true to Moslem standards although legend and tradition had invented other motives and reasons for his belligerent activities.[104] In Tamburlaine's world, as in the Moslem one, war was carried out with a singleness of purpose which placed the battlefield above all other areas of activity. Its prime value lay in the fact that the wars were the means of fulfilling the express command of the God of the Moslems. Marlowe could have disguised the Moslem theme of holy wars in the pagan aspirations of the earthly Tamburlaine and in the idol worship directed towards this god of war. One may add that the Elizabethans were not insensitive to the ethical value of holy war. The engagements with the Spanish Armada were qualified as such a war,[105] a fact which shows

---

102. Ibid.

103. See ibid., p. 50.

104. See above, p. 120.

105. See MacLure, op. cit., n. 20, p. 70.

how close to their way of thought was the idea of being called by God to direct their hostilities against whomever they assumed to be enemies of God.

Warfare carried out with a sense of dedication as that displayed by Tamburlaine supposed a total involvement of one's self to the cause motivating this militancy. To the ones engaged in the offensive, the frontline was the occasion to display greatness, courage, nobility of purpose. To the victims of these onslaughts, the glories of war were probably masked by suffering and defeat. Greville has seized the duality of the image of warfare as inspired by Mahomet and his practice, when he explains that the furies of war are disguised with the appearance of virtue, honour, zeal and merit, while in reality, they are "a mixture...of pride, rage, auarice, / Ambition, lust, and euery tragicke vice".[106] True to this double image, Tamburlaine is the personification of these virtues and sins at the same time. No one will deny the deeds of treachery, of stark cruelty, of inhumaneness which make up the warp of his career. The list of Tamburlaine's evil deeds by Christian standards is too long to be ignored. Ambition and pride are the drives which feed his wrathful initiatives while he becomes less and less indifferent to the prospect of the wealth and treasures to be had. But, at the same time, one must admit that the evil side of Tamburlaine's nature does not seem to be an obstacle of any consequence when the time comes to assess the popularity of the play. Tamburlaine manages to earn for himself a fair response of applause and acclaim from his audience. It is true that the brilliance of the language and the glitter of certain scenes do help to take the edge off the grim and gory moments of the play, but Marlowe does more than that in favour of his hero. Magnificence and splendour are easily associated with Tamburlaine in spite of his cruel and evil deeds. How does Marlowe manage to weave in the glow of nobility and grandeur into the sordid cruelty of Tamburlaine's nature? What are the sources of Marlowe's, and therefore of Tamburlaine's, notions of these values which

---

106. Grosart, ed. cit., n. 9, "A Treatie of Warres", vol. 2, p. 110, stanza 20.

redeem the hero? How do these values reflect the commonly accepted standards of honour and virtue and meet the expectations of the audience?

By the time Marlowe set about to write his play, a debate about the concept of honour and virtue had been going on for centuries. Religious values were at the heart of it as the Christian set of ideals was repeatedly weighed against the pagan-humanistic one .[107] The emphasis placed on each was largely determined by the importance attached to life in this world as opposed to that of the next. In the final analysis, one's views depended on one's beliefs in the immortality of the soul. This belief determined whether life in the next world under a divine or cosmic Being should take precedence over the values of this world under the auspices of secular reason[108] freed from any obligations to a divine Being. Thus, human endeavours were either relegated into insignificance[109] or became all important.

The Renaissance ethos, in general, had been fashioned out of Christian elements and pagan concepts of moral ethics.[110] Many of the pagan views remained irreconcilable with the Christian views about divine authority.[111] Although the Renaissance moralist could easily draw his examples from Biblical history,[112] he was yet concerned with the teaching of the Neo-Aristotelian school in which Pomponazzi had done much to weaken the sway exercised by theories on the immortality of the soul and their implications in real life.[113] If the immortality of the soul was rejected, man became the centre of the scale of values, either

---

107. See Watson, op. cit., n. 15, pp. 3 ff.

108. See ibid., pp. 20 ff.

109. See ibid., p. 20.

110. See ibid., p. 56.

111. See ibid., p. 57.

112. See ibid., p. 59.

113. See Martin Pine, "Pomponazzi and the Problem of 'Double Truth'", JHI 29 (1968), pp. 163-176.

in himself or in himself as he related to others. The pagan idea of honour and the ethics that went into its acquisition became all important, almost a religion on its own,[114] as a stepping-stone to immortality. Reputation or one's existence in the mind and opinion of others was of the utmost significance as it constituted the immortal part of one's self.[115] Thus, honour was a social virtue. One acquired glory and fame by heroic accomplishments worthy of the admiration of one's peers or by having a good name, or by enjoying the respect and esteem displayed by one's entourage and community.[116] This was the basis of the Queen's favouritism and much of the attraction of the life at court.[117] Elizabethans were sensitive to this code of honour.

Honour was basically a private quest motivated by the thirst for immortality. Man was ever preoccupied with living on after death in the memory of mankind. Poggio reveals this preoccupation when he writes of Tamerlane's military exploits;[118] these were not the best means to be remembered as the forgotten hero proved. In the absence of the posthumous immortality of the soul, one could become immortal by one or more of the following achievements: the begetting of offspring who would assume the responsibility of handing the traditions down to succeeding generations, the accomplishment of some memorable deeds of high virtue, the acquisition of fame as a writer or a poet, or the contemplation of absolute and immortal beauty.[119] The concepts of honour and immortality understood in this way were not a Christian heritage but rather a legacy of the Greeks and Romans.[120] Naturally, questions were asked about what true virtue

---

114. See Watson, op. cit., n. 15, p. 4.

115. See ibid., p. 4.

116. See ibid., p. 11.

117. See ibid., p. 72.

118. See above, p. 96.

119. See Watson, op. cit., n. 15, p. 23.

120. See ibid., p. 48.

or honour consisted in. Opinions varied; some were reluctant to discard the importance of noble lineage.[121] In general, however, the Renaissance gentleman aspired to honour and nobility by his intense personal devotion to virtue.[122] Magnanimity implied greatness and heroism in performing deeds of unusual difficulty. It manifested contempt for fortune and external influences: the magnanimous man liked to feel self-sufficient and superior rather than rely on the help of divine Providence. He displayed unshaken resolution and constancy of purpose in the performance of his duties; he was an unflinching tower of strength when faced by his obligations.[123] The Renaissance man was not concerned with proving his integrity according to a code of virtues set by the demands of a superior divine Being. He was interested rather in displaying the power and excellence of man in all their aspects on purely human terms. To live by the dictates of what was termed as virtù was his aim and interest. Hence the frequent ambiguity of the word "virtue" when used in Renaissance literature, Tamburlaine not excepted. An honourable death was the ultimate proof of the greatness of the Renaissance man. Although the morality of suicidal death was debated, suicide was not altogether devoid of honour. In certain circumstances, it was openly praised, as in the case of the three Roman ladies who had killed themselves as a proof of their love for their husbands.[124] A posthumous reputation, social status, rewards in terms of prestige, pomp, ceremony, retinue were all part of honour. For a woman, to be honourable was to be chaste, and faithful to her husband.[125] Dishonour and shame were intolerable in this context where honour was the prime value: they were to be avoided at all costs. This

---

121. See ibid., pp. 77-78.

122. See ibid., p. 93.

123. See ibid., p. 107.

124. See ibid., pp. 117 ff.

125. See ibid., p. 159.

concept of honour, prevalent in the age of the Renaissance, explains the aspirations and behaviour of many characters in the drama of that age, in Shakespeare's plays as well as in the Tamburlaine of Marlowe. Marlowe's hero perceives honour, nobility, magnanimity, and virtue according to this code. It may be worthwhile to discuss briefly the concept of honour in Tamburlaine both in order to understand some terms of the hero's religion of war and to grasp how some aspects of the hero could relate to the Renaissance code of honour and thereby merit the Elizabethan's acclaim.

There is no question of Tamburlaine associating nobility with royal or aristocratic pedigree. Indeed, the royal characters in the play compare most unfavourably with the noble figure of Tamburlaine. Mycetes is a witless fool who, for his lack of eloquence, is helpless to make his will known to his people and must rely on his brother or his assistants to be his spokemen (1T. 1.1 and 2.2). He lacks the two basic virtues of wit and eloquence which Elizabethans expected to find in a monarch.[126] Cosroe,although superior to his brother Mycetes, proves to be quite unperceptive. He fails to read, in Tamburlaine's support, the Scythian's plans to use him as a stepping-stone to Persian rule. Cosroe plays the part of a tool, a perfect one at that, used by Tamburlaine to achieve his purpose of winning the crown. All the other royal figures, Bajazet, the Soldan, Callapine, as well as the aristocratic Theridamas, are dwarfed by Tamburlaine's gigantic moral stature.

Tamburlaine does, however, cherish nobility and greatness on other grounds, on the grounds of personal worth rather than on ancestry. He makes this very evident when he awards titles and honours to his captains after the defeat of Bajazet. He says:

> You that have marcht with happy Tamburlaine,
> . . . . . .
> Deserve these tytles I endow you with,

---

126. See B.V., Exod. 4:16, n. (i).

> By valure and by magnanimity.
> Your byrthes shall be no blemish to your fame,
> For vertue is the fount whence honor springs,
> And they are worthy she investeth kings.
> (1T. 4.4.121, 125-129)

In the same way that Tamburlaine fails to consider his base parentage as an obstacle to his greatness, so the humble background of his men is no obstacle to their fame. Personal virtue and worth are the only values by which to judge his men, the only road to ranks of nobility. However, throughout the whole play, virtue, honour, magnanimity are sought, judged, and assessed in the measure that they are relevant to Tamburlaine's warfare. For throughout his whole career, Tamburlaine's honour will "consist in sheading blood"(1T. 5.1.77), although he does make the reservation that he will do so only "When men presume to manage armes with him" (1T. 5.1.478), or in other words, when warfare is a matter of self-defence or of defending his rights. Tamburlaine's men have deserved these titles of kings in their respective territories in return for their services to his cause. Honour has come to them for their valour on the battlefield for he affirms elsewhere: "Virtue solely is the sum of glorie / And fashions men with true nobility" (1T. 5.1.189). Royal pedigree and wealth are factors which bear no weight in the matter of true worth and valour in Tamburlaine's world. He tells his youngest son Celebinus that if he shine in complete virtue more than his brothers, he then shall be crowned king rather than the other two (2T. 1.3.50 ff.).

Just what does the hero mean by "virtue"? One senses that Tamburlaine's use of the word implies meanings other than the ones generally read into the word. The conventional meaning of virtue, as opposed to vice, supposes principles of good behaviour which spell out the moral excellence of a person as it is revealed in private and public life. These principles fashion the qualities of an individual as they are displayed in his relationship with his family, his colleagues, as well as with his foe. Kindness, prudence, temperance, clemency, justice, and others, all of these are moral assets which are usually esteemed for their effects. One must admit, however, that there is little of

this in the play. Tamburlaine's tokens of kindness are few and these are imparted only to individuals inasmuch as they have complied fully with his will. Tamburlaine's liberalities to his colleagues have been well earned by the time they are distributed. His kindnesses to Zenocrate and the Soldan are measured. There is little evidence of clemency in Tamburlaine's world of war. The justice Tamburlaine metes out is that of death as a consequence of any displeasure he might incur, the examples of Agydas and Calyphas being victims of such displeasures. The wrathful Tamburlaine is seldom patient. One must conclude that Tamburlaine's use of the word "virtue" spells out moral values other than the ones generally associated with the word. These values are rather those of the Renaissance notion of virtù.

To Tamburlaine and his entourage, the word "virtue", or virtù, is limited, or extended, in its meaning in the measure of its relevance to warfare. It is first and foremost synonymous with strength and power on the battlefield, with courage to face the enemy and with boldness in taking risks. It suggests acts of superhuman power, mighty works, and superiority derived from unusual ability or merit, all being assessed by their service to warfare. Virtue in Tamburlaine means "valour and excesse of strength" (1T. 2.1.28) which make the hero apt to rule the world. Tamburlaine's virtue is a power which overcomes all and everything in his way, whose weight must be felt by friend and foe and which makes him chide the Turkish kings, "That will not see the strength of Tamburlaine, / Although it shine as brightly as the Sun" (2T. 4.1.133-134). He warns them:

> Now you shal feele the strength of Tamburlain,
> And by the state of his supremacie,
> Approove the difference twixt himself and you.
> (2T. 4.1.135-137).

Tamburlaine's strength or virtù is one which thrives on cruelty, destruction, and oppression. Usumcasane,undoubtedly, has this in mind when he begs heaven to make the threatening devils "feel the strength of Tamburlain " (2T. 5.3.37). So has the dying Tamburlaine when he is forced to admit that his "martial strength is spent" (2T. 5.3.119). Tamburlaine's virtù suggests excellence but

only of the kind which may be associated with the quest for power, and with the waging of war. Only that excellence is the subject of praise in Tamburlaine's world. Only on the battleline can this virtue be lived; its corresponding vice is cowardice.

It has been said that for the Renaissance gentleman, honour was to virtue as the shadow of a man is to his body.[127] In other words, honour is determined and proportioned by the degree of virtue deserving it. For Tamburlaine and his followers, honour is measured by one's worth in his world of warfare. As may be expected, honour is a prominent theme in the play. The word appears in a whole spectrum of meanings as it is applied to various characters and situations. Just as in the minds of the Renaissance man, virtue and honour had social significance, so do they in Tambulaine's mind. Honour derived from fame through warfare is the major preoccupation for Tamburlaine and his colleagues. Early in the play, Tamburlaine visualizes his future greatness, "when /his/ name and honor shall be spread" (1T. 1.2.205) throughout the world as a benefit both to himself and those collaborating with him, Theridamas in this case. Rewards are promised in terms of honours based on merit in warfare: "You shall have honors as your merits be" (1T. 1.2.255). Occasionally, however, Tamburlaine's quest for honour bears a tinge of altruism even though it is not totally bereft of egocentric interests. He is anxious to earn fame and honour in order that he may be more worthy of Zenocrate. For this reason, he puts off his marriage with her "Until with greater honors I be grac'd" (1T. 4.4.140), as he explains to her. Zenocrate's companion Anippe consoles her mistress who fears the consequences of Tamburlaine's rash warfare by assuring her of the safety of he "that fights for honor to adorne your head"(1T. 5.1.376). With time Tamburlaine develops exaggerated notions of himself as a source of honour to others. He becomes so great that Bajazet is "Unworthy to imbrace or touch the ground / That beares the honor of /his/ royall waight" (1T. 4.2.20-21). He honours

---

127. See Watson, op. cit., n. 15, p. 94.

the Turkish kings by using them to draw his carriage (2T. 4.3.6). They should rejoice at having "so proud a chariot" (2T. 4.3.3) at their heels, "And such a Coachman as great Tamburlaine" (2T. 4.3.4). When they become exhausted, he condemns them to death for their best has been done to honour him. His honour grows beyond the bounds of this earth. As a driver, he honours more the Turkish kings by letting them draw his chariot than were the horses guiding the sun honoured by their driver (2T. 4.3.7-10). The Jades of Thrace tamed by Alcides "were not subdew'd with valour more divine" (2T. 4.3.15) than the Turkish kings by the "unconquered arme" of Tamburlaine (2T. 4.3.16). At the end of the play, Theridamas implies that Tamburlaine's greatness "made his state an honor to the heavens" (2T. 5.3.12). Usumcasane echoes these words when he challenges heaven: "Blush heaven to loose the honor of thy name" (2T. 5.3.28) by letting Tamburlaine die. Thus Tamburlaine is a source of honour for friend and foe, for Zenocrate, his colleagues, and his captives as well as for the powers of heaven.

As may be expected, as was the case in the days of the Renaissance, one aspect of Tamburlaine's honour is to remain unyielding once his word or decision has been pronounced. No amount of pathos in the pleas of the Virgins of Damascus to spare them and their fellow-countrymen will deter Tamburlaine from carrying out his unflinching will. He warns them: "Virgins, in vaine ye labour to prevent / That which mine honor sweares shal be perform'd" (1T. 5.1.106-107). He reaffirms his position: "I will not spare these proud Egyptians, / Nor change my Martiall observations" (1T. 5.1.121-122) for, he says, the Damascenes "know my customes are as peremptory / As wrathfull Planets, death, or destinie" (1T. 5.1.127-128). In this respect and according to Greville, Tamburlaine is a true reproduction of Mahomet, for "what his will impos'd the World must fear"[128] as was the case for the founder of Islam.

In view of the high esteem Tamburlaine and the other characters of the play had for honour, the humiliation inflicted upon Bajazet, Zabina, and upon

---

128. Grosart, ed. cit., n. 9, "A Treatie of Monarchy" vol. 1, p. 25, stanza 58.

all of Tamburlaine's captives, are all the more shameful and infamous. So is Calyphas's failure to respond to his father's wishes. Tamburlaine is literally writhing with shame at the sight of so dishonourable a son. Renaissance spectators must have sensed how seriously the image of excellence in Tamburlaine was tarnished in this tragic moment of the play.

Immortality was a preoccupation of Tamburlaine as it was for Marlowe's contemporaries. As may be expected, the prospects of immortality of the soul in the after-world could bear no weight in the pagan world of Tamburlaine. Only two avenues to immortality were open to Marlowe's hero, that of fame and that of posterity. Marlowe explores both of these possibilities in his play. Tamburlaine wishes to live on as a glorious name, to be as immortal as the gods, possibly as the deified great figures of antiquity. He hopes to live on immortally in the spirit of his two sons and in their posterity (2T. 5.3.172-174). However, once more, the immortal image of Tamburlaine hopes to have loses its glow. Amyras's tearful and timorous apprehensions in face of his responsibilities as king, persist to the end (2T. 5.3.195-198, 206-209). In spite of the mysterious and supernatural powers of transformation which the crown and the royal vestments were supposed to effect on the new heir to the throne,[129] Tamburlaine dies leaving his throne to a successor who holds no promise of being a worthy son of the Scythian. One senses that Tamburlaine's immortality will not live on in his posterity but uniquely in the fame and renown he has succeeded to win for himself throughout his life.

---

129. It was the general belief that a genuine transformation occurred in the new king by the very fact that he became a sovereign. Edward III undergoes a profound change when he assumes the rule of his country. He suddenly develops the necessary qualities of leadership enabling him to cope with the problems in the country in spite of his youth and lack of experience: see Edward II. 5.6.25 ff. The crown was supposed to cleanse the new king from imperfections, from past treasons or felonies. This doctrine was a secularization of the purging power of the sacraments. It held that an emperor's consecration had the same effects as baptism: see Ernst. H. Kantorowicz, The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology (Princeton, 1957) p. 12.

Marlowe's views on honour with regard to war have been shown to correspond to those of his contemporaries. So do they with respect to women. Much is made of the respect which Tamburlaine is supposed to have shown towards Zenocrate prior to their marriage. The Soldan is grateful to Tamburlaine who has "with honor usde Zenocrate" (1T. 5.1.484). He explains: "I yeeld with thanks and protestations / Of endlesse honor to thee for her love"(1T. 5.1.496-497). The Damascenes choose Virgins to beg for their lives now threatened by Tamburlaine hoping that their honor will induce him to use mercy on them (1T. 5.1.18 ff.). Olympia's faithfulness to her dead husband is underscored by the failure of Theridamas's love suit in spite of all he has to offer. (2T. 4.2.38 ff.). In contrast to these women who deserve honour for their virtue, the Turkish concubines are held in utter contempt. Tamburlaine has nothing but scorn for them (2T. 4.3.82, 86-87), an attitude probably meant to reflect the Renaissance concept of honour.

Thus an examination of the concept of honour in Tamburlaine reveals that the hero is interested in the subject only inasmuch as the principles underlying honour and virtue enhance or promote his warfare. They are the virtues which provide Tamburlaine's religion of war with the needed ideals of excellence if his creed is to be coherent within itself and convincing to his audience.

III

According to Greville, Mahomet's doctrine consists in teaching war and hazard.[130] So does Tamburlaine's, especially in the second part of the play. In the first part of Tamburlaine, war is the topic in all the situations presented in the play. Tamburlaine feels best suited in an armour and armed with a curtle-axe (1T. 1.2.42-43). He perceives the future in terms of crowns and empires won by the sword. He means to offer himself to Zenocrate in no other guise but in that of a conqueror. He promises "martiall prises" (1T. 1.2.102) to Zenocrate and "martiall spoile" (1T. 1.2.191) to Theridamas. The theme of warfare invades all the variations of his human relationships, his love for Zenocrate, his friendship with his colleagues, and naturally his treatment of his captives. The future is perceived totally in relation to war, fame, crowns, kingdoms, power, glory: all is to be had as prizes for his campaigns.

In the second part of the play, the theme of warfare is all the more pervasive. It determines even the quality of the father-son relationships of Tamburlaine with his three sons. It is within the context of this relationship mainly that Tamburlaine twice teaches the principles of warfare to his growing sons. In the course of the first session, the importance of external appearances is brought forth once more. While Tamburlaine had a physique which presaged world-rule (1T. 2.1.29-30), while Theridamas's appearance suggested he should have had thousands under his command (1T. 1.2.168-171), Tamburlaine's sons appear as anything but martial (2T. 1.3.21-22). Their looks suppose "their want of courage and of wit" (2T. 1.3.24). Their hair is too white and too soft (2T. 1.3.25). They seem better suited for music, love, and play rather than for battle. Altogether "they are too dainty for the wars" (2T. 1.3.28). Nevertheless, upon Zenocrate's reassurance of their valour, Tamburlaine proceeds to

---

130. See Grosart, ed. cit., n. 9, "A Treatie of Warres", vol. 2, p. 109, stanza 17.

teach them the glories of battle.

In this lesson, the first one, Tamburlaine is more concerned with the general aspects of war. He hopes that like him they will be scourges and terror to the world (2T. 1.3.59-60, 63). He promises each of his sons the usual set of weapons of battle: shield, lance, armour, horse, helmet, curtle-axe (2T. 1.3.43-44), and begins to initiate them to the art of charging foes "And harmelesse run among the deadly pikes" (2T. 1.3.46) and to stir their courage to face the hazards of the battlefield. Once more the prospects of royal crowns and empery and of the company of captives as trophies of war are listed as rewards for bravery, rewards which again will be awarded according to individual merits (2T. 1.3.47 ff.). The most worthy will be, as opposed to Tamburlaine himself, the one

> Whose head hath deepest scarres, whose breast most woundes,
> Which being wroth, sends lightning from his eies,
> And in the furrowes of his frowning browes,
> Harbors revenge, war, death and cruelty.
> (2T. 1.3.75-78)

Tamburlaine depicts a most gruesome landscape of war: a worthy warrior must be ready to "wade up to the chin in blood" (2T. 1.3.84). However, Tamburlaine manages to elicit a proper response from all his sons except Calyphas. Tamburlaine's eldest son is clearly not of this mettle.

The second lesson in warfare comes fast upon the death of Zenocrate. This is another occasion for Tamburlaine's new surge of violence. There are no limits to Tamburlaine's plans, no boundaries in heaven or earth to stop him. The deceased Zenocrate is made an accomplice to his wars.[131] However, the spate of mourning is cut short by Tamburlaine's immediate instructions on the building and assaulting of forts, instructions which constitute the second session of his teaching about war. Much of this material which Tamburlaine uses is known to have been drawn from Paul Ive's Practice of Fortification which Marlowe must

---

131. See below, pp. 405 ff.

have read in manuscript.[132] Tamburlaine's teaching is exclusively on methods of assault, on how to get as was Mahomet's discipline.[133] Nowhere does Tamburlaine attempt to teach any code of honesty, of clemency, or of kindness. Now that the dissonant voice of Zenocrate in this war chorus is gone, the only purpose of Tamburlaine's existence is to wage war; the only purpose of his son's existence must also be the waging of war.

Zenocrate's dismay brought about by Tamburlaine's teaching of warfare to his sons would perhaps justify a digression in which her place in the play and, therefore, that of Olympia, her counterpart in the second part of Tamburlaine, might be assessed. Zenocrate, a creation of Marlowe's, and Olympia, for whose story the dramatist was chiefly indebted to Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, XXVIII and XXIX,[134] are the two leading women in the play. They are similar in many ways and radically different in many others. Both appear on the stage as captives; both are wooed by their captors; both are seen in a family situation with their husbands and children, and both die in the play. The remarkable beauty of each is the subject of rapturous love suits on the part of their respective lovers. Both are exposed to the allurements of riches and to the prospects of a sensational marriage. Both are caught up in Tamburlaine's world of war. However, the similarities stop there; the differences point to deep contrasts in these two women, in their sense of loyalties, in their manner of facing up to the crises created by Tamburlaine's activities and in the impact each bears on the situations in which they are called to play their part.

However beautiful Zenocrate may be, her moral image is not without flaws by any means. Seduced by a mere shepherd's talk of future crowns and emperies,

---

132. See Jump, ed. cit., n. 84, p. xiv. See also Bowers, ed. cit., n. 25, vol. 1, p. 74.

133. See Grosart, ed. cit., n. 9, "A Treatie of Warres", vol. 2, p. 109. stanza 17.

134. See Jump, ed. cit., n. 84, p. xiv.

have read in manuscript.[132] Tamburlaine's teaching is exclusively on methods of assault, on how to get as was Mahomet's discipline.[133] Nowhere does Tamburlaine attempt to teach any code of honesty, of clemency, or of kindness. Now that the dissonant voice of Zenocrate in this war chorus is gone, the only purpose of Tamburlaine's existence is to wage war; the only purpose of his son's existence must also be the waging of war.

Zenocrate's dismay brought about by Tamburlaine's teaching of warfare to his sons would perhaps justify a digression in which her place in the play and, therefore, that of Olympia, her counterpart in the second part of Tamburlaine, might be assessed. Zenocrate, a creation of Marlowe's, and Olympia, for whose story the dramatist was chiefly indebted to Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, XXVIII and XXIX,[134] are the two leading women in the play. They are similar in many ways and radically different in many others. Both appear on the stage as captives; both are wooed by their captors; both are seen in a family situation with their husbands and children, and both die in the play. The remarkable beauty of each is the subject of rapturous love suits on the part of their respective lovers. Both are exposed to the allurements of riches and to the prospects of a sensational marriage. Both are caught up in Tamburlaine's world of war. However, the similarities stop there; the differences point to deep contrasts in these two women, in their sense of loyalties, in their manner of facing up to the crises created by Tamburlaine's activities and in the impact each bears on the situations in which they are called to play their part.

However beautiful Zenocrate may be, her moral image is not without flaws by any means. Seduced by a mere shepherd's talk of future crowns and emperies,

---

132. See Jump, ed. cit., n. 84, p. xiv. See also Bowers, ed. cit., n. 25, vol. 1, p. 74.

133. See Grosart, ed. cit., n. 9, "A Treatie of Warres", vol. 2, p. 109. stanza 17.

134. See Jump, ed. cit., n. 84, p. xiv.

have read in manuscript.[132] Tamburlaine's teaching is exclusively on methods of assault, on how to get as was Mahomet's discipline.[133] Nowhere does Tamburlaine attempt to teach any code of honesty, of clemency, or of kindness. Now that the dissonant voice of Zenocrate in this war chorus is gone, the only purpose of Tamburlaine's existence is to wage war; the only purpose of his son's existence must also be the waging of war.

Zenocrate's dismay brought about by Tamburlaine's teaching of warfare to his sons would perhaps justify a digression in which her place in the play and, therefore, that of Olympia, her counterpart in the second part of Tamburlaine, might be assessed. Zenocrate, a creation of Marlowe's, and Olympia, for whose story the dramatist was chiefly indebted to Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, XXVIII and XXIX,[134] are the two leading women in the play. They are similar in many ways and radically different in many others. Both appear on the stage as captives; both are wooed by their captors; both are seen in a family situation with their husbands and children, and both die in the play. The remarkable beauty of each is the subject of rapturous love suits on the part of their respective lovers. Both are exposed to the allurements of riches and to the prospects of a sensational marriage. Both are caught up in Tamburlaine's world of war. However, the similarities stop there; the differences point to deep contrasts in these two women, in their sense of loyalties, in their manner of facing up to the crises created by Tamburlaine's activities and in the impact each bears on the situations in which they are called to play their part.

However beautiful Zenocrate may be, her moral image is not without flaws by any means. Seduced by a mere shepherd's talk of future crowns and emperies,

---

132. See Jump, ed. cit., n. 84, p. xiv. See also Bowers, ed. cit., n. 25, vol. 1, p. 74.

133. See Grosart, ed. cit., n. 9, "A Treatie of Warres", vol. 2, p. 109. stanza 17.

134. See Jump, ed. cit., n. 84, p. xiv.

she readily forgoes her betrothal with the king Arabia and marries Tamburlaine. She might be excused for doing so if Tamburlaine and his group were other than what they are. But as she is allured by the prospects of wealth, prestige, and fame, Zenocrate is in fact compromising with a group for whom deceit and betrayals are the order of the day. Theridamas accedes to a position second to none but that of Tamburlaine on the benefits to be gained by being a traitor to his king Mycetes. Tamburlaine grasps the Persian crown on the advantages of a treacherous turn-about against Cosroe, his ally. Zenocrate agrees to become a part of this unscrupulous group for whom the end justifies the means. Olympia's moral image is quite the reverse of that of Zenocrate. No amount of persuasion will draw her into Tamburlaine's circle of friends. Talk of military prowess by Theridamas, Tamburlaine's closest friend and most faithful mirror-image, prospects of wealth and marriage, all leave her absolutely unmoved. The name of Tamburlaine inspires neither fear nor admiration in Olympia. On no account will she, even remotely, become involved in Tamburlaine's world of war.

Curiously enough, the sweet and peaceful Zenocrate is first won by Tamburlaine's talk of war at the beginning of the play. And yet, Zenocrate never becomes fully a part of that world as Tamburlaine's queen. In some ways, she never becomes more than a beautiful presence, one who has won Tamburlaine but who never manages to exercise any influence in his affairs. She remains to the end a lonely figure, to some extent, psychologically out of touch with her warrior-husband, unable to draw him to her own peaceful way of life away from his battlefields and, herself, unable to cope with the demands of such a state of life. She is never in command of any situation; Tamburlaine's renewed intensity of warfare after her death is a proof of her inability to mould the world around her. Her sons, heirs to her charms, are effeminate, totally inapt for the kind of fighting Tamburlaine hopes to get from them. Her inability to reconcile war with the gentleness of her nature is reflected in Calyphas who, for the same reason, ends his life in disastrous circumstances. Tamburlaine's world is essentially one of disharmony; its various elements fail to integrate

into a harmonious unity, and one of these elements is Zenocrate.

Olympia's presence contributes a very different quality to the play. She is a symbol of loyalty to her deceased husband, a loyalty which she is determined to preserve at any price. Olympia is fully active in her world and in full command of the crisis brought on by Tamburlaine's presence. Her sense of duty inspires her the course of action to follow in order to morally preserve her own. She does not hesitate to pay the price dictated by her principles, that of her life and that of her son. Her son, in contrast to Calyphas and his brothers, can face the rigours brought on by war with an undaunted courage. As a matter of fact, Olympia seems to have been included in the play mainly to act as a silent judge of the action of the other characters. Her sense of loyalty condemns Zenocrate's easy shift from Arabia to Tamburlaine. It also condemns the deceit displayed by Theridamas and Tamburlaine. The courage of her son puts the sons of Zenocrate to shame. Like Tamburlaine she does not hesitate to kill her son but for a very different reason. Tamburlaine kills Calyphas to soothe his wounded shame. Olympia kills her son to shield him from the shame of failing to live up to her high principles of honour and loyalty. Tamburlaine kills Calyphas because his exaggerated self-deification has distorted his sense of values; Olympia kills her son in order to preserve his and her moral integrity. It is interesting to note that Marlowe should have chosen his most morally perfect character in the play among the heathen Turks. In this, he was possibly following a Biblical pattern; the Moabite Ruth[135] and the Samaritan[136] were examples of virtue drawn from nations other than the chosen people of Israel. While Zenocrate's death is simply a quiet and resigned disappearance from the scene, Olympia's is the heroic climax of a life untainted by moral flaws of any kind. She makes the supreme sacrifice in order to remain faithful to a code of honour which would appeal to pagans and Christians alike. Olympia may be the

---

135. See Ruth, 2:2.

136. See Luke 10:33.

point of reconciliation between the pagan world of the Moslems on the stage and the Christian ethics of an Elizabethan audience. Whatever her presence is meant to signify, she is a shining example of virtue and moral integrity by any standards, the only one of its kind in the play.

Greville writes that Mahomet preached the law of the sword.[137] Marlowe may have had this in mind when he wrote his play for the sword fulfils a prominent role in the drama. Battenhouse assumes that the sword in Tamburlaine's world plays the counterpart of the cross in a Christian world.[138] This assessment of the role of the sword in Tamburlaine's career may be justified as the following hopes to illustrate.

Like the earthly Esau, Tamburlaine may be said to live by the sword.[139] Marlowe introduces Tamburlaine in the prologue as "the Scythian Tamburlaine, / ... / ... scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword" (1T. Pro. 4, 6). This conquering sword, or its alternative form as a spear, becomes a part of Tamburlaine; it is the answer to all his needs as a warrior whether he aspires to crowns, or conquers, rules, communicates, leads and scourges. Early in the play, Tamburlaine's future empery is linked with his weapon, for Tamburlaine "in conceit [bears] Empires" (1T. 1.2.64) on his spear. Cosroe instructs his future regent of Persia and general Lieutenant of his armies (1T. 2.5.8-9) as follows:

> ... now whet thy winged sword
> And lift thy lofty arme into the cloudes,
> That it may reach the King of Perseas crowne.
> (1T. 2.3.51-53)

One could almost fancy an apocalyptic flaming sword, that of Jove's messenger, sweeping the skies and reaching into the clouds to pick coveted crowns.

---

137. See Grosart, ed. cit., n. 9, "A Treatie of Warres", vol. 2, p. 109, stanza 17.

138. See above, p. 351.

139. See above, p. 170, n. 139.

Tamburlaine's victories arouse the hopes of his friends (1T. 2.3.51-54). Theridamas yearns for such moments of triumph: "I long to see those crownes won by our sword, / That we may raigne as kings of Affrica" (1T. 3.3.98-99). For Tamburlaine's ambitions have made "the friends of Tamburlaine / To lift /their/ swords against the Persean King" (1T. 2.7.34-35), and start the Scythian in his career of victories.

Tamburlaine's sword is put to a variety of uses as needs and situations arise in the play. It fulfils the role of a potential instrument in sacrificial rites as suggested by Bajazet's pleas to be dispatched by Tamburlaine. Rather than to be used as a footstool, Bajazet would rather die:

> First shalt thou rip my bowels with thy sword,
> And sacrifice my heart to death and hell,
> Before I yeeld to such a slavery.
> (1T. 4.2.16-18)

Tamburlaine willingly encourages his sons to lead their Turkish captives "sheep-like to the sword" (2T. 4.1.77). Under the leadership of Tamburlaine, the swords of his men act as channels of communication. While debating on the course of action to take in face of the outnumbering army of Theridamas, Techelles decides: "Our swordes shall play the Orators" (1T. 1.2.132), a stand supported by Tamburlaine who says: "... gainst the General we will lift our swords" (1T. 1.2.145) and make him prisoner.

The sword is a means of challenging the enemy and of proving one's worth. Theridamas is dared by Tamburlaine whom he has just met: "Draw foorth thy sword, thou mighty man at Armes" (1T. 1.2.178) and Jove himself will shield Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine challenges Mahomet to strike him "That shakes his sword against /his/ majesty" (2T. 5.1.195). Tamburlaine, suddenly taken ill, stricken as he thinks by some daring god, begs his followers:

> Techelles and the rest, come take your swords,
> And threaten him whose hand afflicts my soul,
> Come let us march against the powers of heaven,
> And set blacke streamers in the firmament,
> To signifie the slaughter of the Gods.
> (2T. 5.3.46-50)

The use of swords in campaigns and slaughter is to be extended into the regions of the gods. Deities do not escape the threatening presence of the sword of Tamburlaine and his men.

In the words of Usumcasane, Tamburlaine and his men anticipate the power they will exercise on rival rulers for "kings shall crouch unto our conquering swords" (1T. 1.2.220), they say. Tamburlaine does not dismiss the idea of exercising similar powers over the gods: "Yet would I with my sword make Jove to stoope" (1T. 4.4.74). In a more down-to-earth mood, Tamburlaine taunts the captive Bajazet during the banquet scene as he offers him food: "... take it from my swords point ..." (1T. 4.4.40).

Tamburlaine's sword is useful in inducing phenomena similar to those produced by Nature. Speaking about his encounter with Bajazet on the battle-field, Tamburlaine boasts: "My sword stroke fire from his coat of steele" (1T. 4.2.41), a fire like a flash of lightning. The swords of Tamburlaine and his men will "Fill all the aire with fiery meteors" (1T. 4.2.52), and transform nature into a display of fireworks. Finally, in retaliation for Zenocrate's death, he wishes Techelles to draw his sword, "And wound the earth, that it may cleave in twaine" (2T. 2.4.97). Tamburlaine extends his destructive power into the very earth or translates it into the heavens. No region is barred from Tamburlaine's presence as a warrior nor from his sword, symbol of his warring power.

As may be expected, Tamburlaine's sword and death are closely interrelated. The sword opens the doors to death in the wound Cosroe incurred while defending himself against Tamburlaine's treacherous forces (1T. 2.7.8 ff.). Tamburlaine questions the Virgins of Damascus already condemned to die: "Behold my sword, what see you at the point?" (1T. 5.1.108), to which he immediately supplies the answer: "... there sits Death, there sits imperious Death, / Keeping his circuit by the slicing edge" (1T. 5.1.111-112).[140] Death is the judge possessing an

---

140. Ellis-Fermor explains these lines as follows: "The imperious judge, holds

(continued overleaf.....)

imperious or dictatorial or arbitrary power; the sword is either Death's judgment seat or the circuit which Death follows when acting as a judge and is ceaselessly condemning to death. The spears of Tamburlaine's horsemen are also seats where gluttonous Death constantly feeds (1T. 5.1.114-115). Tamburlaine perceives his sword as worthy of the homage of the Fatal Sisters.[141] Death transmits that homage by running to and fro on Tamburlaine's sword, another reference to the circuit of a judge. Tamburlaine imagines these goddesses as overworked at the mere sight of him:

> Where ere I come the fatall sisters sweat,
> And griesly death, by running to and fro,
> To doo their ceassles homag to my sword.
> (2T. 5.1.454-456).

Tamburlaine's sword is a judgment seat on circuit, even a kind of deity deserving the worship and homage of other divinities until Tamburlaine himself becomes the god of war on whom "death and the fatall sisters waite / With naked swords and scarlet liveries" (2T. 3.4.54-55).

Clearly, the sword is also the standard or banner rousing the belligerent spirits of Tamburlaine and his men. Tamburlaine has faith in its successful guidance: "Our conquering swords shall marshal us the way / We use to march upon the slaughtered foe" (1T. 3.3.148-149). The sword rallies Tamburlaine's sons: "Now brother, follow we our fathers sword" (2T. 4.1.4). Even "proud Fortune, ... hath followed long / The martiall sword of mighty Tamburlaine" (2T. 3.1.27-28). A kind of identity is established between Tamburlaine and his sword. In some respects, the two terms are interchangeable. The Governor of Damascus fears "the custome proper to his sword" (1T. 5.1.13). Death is the inevitable

---

140. Continued..... his court on the edge of Tamburlaine's sword, the image being that of a judge's circuit. Or, more simply, the domain of Death, the area through which he ranges (his circuit), is co-terminous with that reached by Tamburlaine's sword": ed. cit., n. 97, p. 160, n. Jump offers a similar explanation: see ed. cit., n. 84, p. 82, n.

141. See above, p. 375.

outcome of Tamburlaine's unflinching decisions about his three-day sieges. Bajazet finds the task of explaining Tamburlaine's numerous victories difficult. Only superior powers can account for such numerous victories. "But such a Star hath influence in his sword / As rules the Skies, and countermands the Gods" (1T. 5.1.232-233). Tamburlaine enjoys the prestige of his sword, unexplanable except that some unearthly power is in control of the destiny of both Tamburlaine and his warfare. Tamburlaine best explains or defines himself by identifying with his sword, for Zenocrate "hath calmde the furie" of his sword (1T. 5.1.437). After her death, Zenocrate is to become an accomplice in Tamburlaine's warfare. He claims that the mere image of her set upon his royal tent will have such an influence on his men that they will deal with the enemy

> As if Bellona, Goddesse of the war
> Threw naked swords and sulphur bals of fire,
> Upon the heads of all our enemies.
> (2T. 3.2.40-42)

Thus after her death, the peace-loving Zenocrate is to become the equivalent of a new goddess of war wielding the sword of death. On the subject of the epitaph eventually to be written in memory of both himself and Zenocrate, Tamburlaine says:

> We both will rest and have one Epitaph
> Writ in as many severall languages,
> As I have conquered kingdomes with my sword.
> (2T. 2.4.134-136)

As Tamburlaine's sword has been instrumental in determining the extent of his conquests, so will it, thereby, determine in some way, the form of the token which will be erected to their memory.

All through the play the sword plays its part in the fulfilment of Tamburlaine's mission as a scourge. As was announced in the prologue of the first part of the play, Tamburlaine "raceth all his foes with fire and sword" (1T. 4.1.63) all through his career. During the siege of the city, he swears that not one in Damascus shall escape "but perish by our swords" (1T. 4.2.122).

And so he orders to put "the rest to the sword" (1T. 5.1.134) after the Virgins of Damascus have been slain. Tamburlaine has conquered kingdoms with his sword (2T. 2.4.136). Towards the end of his life, he can justifiably boast of himself as "The wrathfull messenger of mighty Jove, / That with his sword hath quail'd all earthly kings" (2T. 5.1.92-93) and "sent millions of Turks to hell" (2T. 5.1.179). Throughout his career, his sword has tracked down the enemy "Til fire and sword have found them at a bay" (2T. 3.2.151), including his former ally Almeda. Tamburlaine means to continue until Jove himself bids him sheathe his sword (2T. 1.3.167).

Little wonder that Zabina dies haunted by the image of Tamburlaine's sword. "Give me the sworde ..." (1T. 5.1.311), she cries in the course of her delirium. Tamburlaine's sword has been the law of his world. It has been the source of glory for Tamburlaine and his men as victors and the cause of shame and despair for the vanquished. Tamburlaine's sword has ruthlessly paved the way for his rule as a scourge. The power of Tamburlaine's sword has dwarfed into insignificance the power of Bajazet's Turks as well as the power of Mahomet's rule set by his Koran. Tamburlaine's law of the sword has developed a gospel of its own which banishes any values contrary to those of the sword.

The values, the teaching, the law of Tamburlaine's religion of war have been examined. They basically match the standards of Mahomet's creed of war, at least as Greville analysed it. There remains to see if at any time in the play Tamburlaine's system was challenged by any set of values other than the ones studied above and to assess how Tamburlaine's code of ethics bore up against these challenges. There also remains to explore the kind of infringements which would constitute a sin against Tamburlaine's religion of war.

One might say that the first major challenge Tamburlaine's spirit of warfare has to face is that of the power of beauty. If the moral image of Zenocrate shows up unfavourably when compared with that of Olympia, there remains the fact that within the context of Tamburlaine's code of honour and virtue, her importance must not be minimized. Tamburlaine was literally subdued at the

first sight of the beautiful Zenocrate and immediately singles her out to be his future queen (1T. 1.2.36-40). What prompted so decisive a choice on the part of Zenocrate if not Zenocrate's beauty? Her social status could have weighed in favour of his choice but it must be remembered that Tamburlaine marries her only when his own status as king of Persia and then of Egypt has outgrown in prestige that of Zenocrate, daughter of the defeated Soldan. It was Zenocrate's beauty which won Tamburlaine at first sight as his rapturous lines prove:

> Zenocrate, lovelier than the Love of Jove,
> Brighter than is the silver Rhodope,
> Fairer than whitest snow on Scythian hils,
> (1T. 1.2.87-89)

is more meaningful to him than the Persian crown, at least for the time being.

However, Zenocrate's part in the play seems to derive its importance from the direct, or indirect, relevance of her presence to Tamburlaine's warfare. In fact, at one point, Zenocrate woefully complains about Tamburlaine's neglect of her (1T. 3.2.1-65). Evidently, while Tamburlaine is absorbed by the business of consolidating his forces at the expense of Mycetes and Cosroe, he has little time or use for Zenocrate. She is ignored when she is neither an asset to his warfare nor a threat to his policies of war. Zenocrate reappears on the scene with Zabina. Marlowe uses Zenocrate's verbal bout with Bajazet's queen as a kind of symbolic reproduction of Tamburlaine's encounter with Bajazet (1T. 3.3.166-211). In this way, she somewhat acts as a copartner to her husband's engagements and enhances the theme of war, the prevailing one throughout the play.

However, Zenocrate becomes a threat to Tamburlaine's norms of warfare. The threat develops into a crisis in connection with the impending fate of the Damascenes. Zenocrate uses the argument of her love for Tamburlaine to re-enforce her tearful pleas on behalf of her father's life and that of her countrymen (1T. 4.4.65-72). In a total disregard for the feelings of Zenocrate in this situation, Tamburlaine immediately transfers the plea in terms of lands to be sacrificed if he yields to her requests. He replies by outlining the effects

which the campaigns he has planned will have on the world. His future victories will necessitate the drafting of a new map of the world (1T. 4.4. 75-82) with provinces, cities, and towns being invested with new names, his and Zenocrate's (1T. 4.4.79-80).[142] Her demands thus merit attention in as much as they might promote his prospects of rule. There is no hope that the safety of one city, Damascus, no matter how important it may be to Zenocrate, may prevail against the possibility of such gains. Tamburlaine's human affections bear little weight in his considerations. He carries out the slaughter of the Damascenes in spite of Zenocrate's entreaties. Zenocrate's pleas, even if unheeded, nevertheless force Tamburlaine into a reassessment of his love for her and to weigh this love against the principles of his code of honour. Does Tamburlaine try to absorb his love for Zenocrate and the honour he must live by into a concept of beauty? Beauty was a necessary component of the traditional principles of honour and virtue. Zenocrate, in her pleas, is aware of the emphasis which must be laid upon honour (1T. 4.4.85). Tamburlaine must destroy Damascus to preserve this honour. The beauty of Zenocrate, the only aspect of his queen which seems meaningful to him, must also be preserved. How does Tamberlaine reconcile beauty with a tearful Zenocrate and adjust his need of this beauty with his love of Zenocrate?

Obviously, Tamburlaine cannot but see the sorrow of Zenocrate at the news of the cruel death which he has inflicted upon her compatriots. It is interesting to note how Tamburlaine perceives her grief. The tearful Zenocrate mourning the loss of the Damascenes is transformed into a vision of new beauty for Tamburlaine. There is no personal concern expressed by Tamburlaine for the griefs of the dishevelled Zenocrate. There is only the perception of Zenocrate's

---

142. The Psalmist says this of rich men: "Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue forever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names": Psa. 49:11. By the same means, Tamburlaine is trying to lure Zenocrate by the prospects of both of them becoming immortal on earth.

beauty under the burden of her grief as a consequence or effect of his wars. Ironically, against the background of the cruelty and destruction inflicted upon Damascus, Tamburlaine compares Zenocrate to Flora; the goddess of flowers and spring (1T. 5.1.140-145), symbols of new beauty and life. Zenocrate's tears are pearls and sapphires on her face. Tamburlaine's thoughts are arrested by the beauty of Zenocrate in tears not by her sorrow. In keeping with Tamburlaine's nature which can function only in a context of war, the tearful eyes of Zenocrate, which can make "The Moone, the Planets, and the Meteors light" (1T. 5.1.150), become a battleground for Tamburlaine, where angels pleading on behalf of the Damascenes challenge Tamburlaine's loyalty to war (1T. 5.1.151-153). Never has Tamburlaine experienced such a struggle in his soul, never has the "conceit of foile" (1T. 5.1.158), or the idea of a possible defeat[143] been so uppermost in his mind. Tamburlaine, nevertheless, resolves the struggle by weighing the demands of beauty against his dedication to warfare. These considerations force him to question himself: "What is beauty, saith my sufferings then?" (1T. 5.1. 160). What is the nature of this power which is so seriously challenging Tamburlaine's values as a warrior? Tamburlaine has thus transposed the struggle onto another plane. Instead of balancing his feelings against those of Zenocrate, Tamburlaine assesses the demands of beauty against those of war. The greater Tamburlaine's understanding of beauty, the greater the power of this beauty to subdue, the greater will be Tamburlaine's victory over this mysterious power of beauty. Marlowes multiplies the images, which, to Ellis-Fermor's way of thinking, have been much overpraised,[144] to show how numerous have been the attempts in the past to define the significance and the essence of beauty in words (1T. 5.1. 161-171). The beauty which is assaulting Tamburlaine now is beyond all these past achievements: there is "One thought, one grace, one woonder at the least, / Which into words no vertue can digest"(1T. 5.1.172-173). Zenocrate is the

---

143. See Jump, ed. cit., n. 84, p. 84, n.

144. See Ellis-Fermor, ed. cit., n. 97, p. 162, n.

essence of beauty itself, beyond the scope of any verbal expression. Indeed, she is the equivalent of a goddess of beauty daunting the god of war, a thought which has already occurred to Tamburlaine when he reaffirms his determination not to spare the Egyptians nor change his "Martiall observations" (1T. 5.1.122), not even "for the love of Venus, would she leave / The angrie God of Armes and lie with /him/ (1T. 5.1.124-125). At this point, Tamburlaine proves himself stronger than Mars, the mythological god of war, and recovers a proper balance between the fascination beauty has for him and the call to war. Tamburlaine concedes that Beauty[145] should be justly revered for its promptings

---

145. The lines 1T. 5.1.178-190 have presented textual difficulties. Jump borrows from Ellis-Fermor (see ed. cit., n. 97, p. 163-164, n.) in his paraphrase:

> Excepting only that in a just reverence for beauty, with the prompting of which the soul of man is stirred, /lies one of the main sources of valor/ and every soldier ... needs the stimulus of beauty to urge his thought to its highest achievement. I, who can both apprehend beauty and hold it to its due function, even that beauty which has calmed the rage of the gods themselves so that they have descended from the very height of heaven to feel the humble joys of human emotions and move in spheres no higher than weedstrown cottages - I shall reveal to the world, despite my birth, that manly prowess is alone the highest glory and alone confers true nobility".

See ed. cit., n. 84, p. 85, n. Bowers interprets this passage as follows:

> Tamburlaine is, in a sense, forecasting the debates between love and honour so popular in Restoration heroic tragedy. Love is represented by the mysterious effect on him of Zenocrate's beauty, which is weakening his resolve to keep to his word and destroy Damascus. Speaking with Marlowe's own voice, he associates this power with the mysterious reaches of the imagination in poetry which seem to penetrate reality farther than physical deeds can manage. Even after he has abruptly pulled himself up short with an accusation of effeminacy, he still returns to the effects of beauty that he feels working within him upon his resolve. The conclusion is not very systematically presented but seems to represent an attempted apotheosis by which he joins both incentives to greatness into a new whole that resolves their apparent differences. Presumably this resolution motivates his decision to satisfy both parts, the one by devastating Damascus but the other by sparing the life of Zenocrate's father.

See ed. cit., n. 25, vol. 1, p. 223.

stir the soul of man, and every soldier aspiring to fame, valour, and victory needs beauty to stimulate him to lofty deeds. Tamburlaine admits he can apprehend Beauty, and has experienced the sway it can exercise on him, but yet, unlike the gods who allowed the power of beauty to make them cease their wars and choose instead the warm complacent life in a shepherd's cottage, he will, in spite of his humble birth, prove to the world that he can hold beauty in its true place and function. Tamburlaine scorns the folly of entertaining thoughts of yielding to the attraction of beauty:

> ... how unseemly is it for my Sex,
> My discipline of armes and Chivalrie,
> My nature and the terrour of my name,
> To harbour thoughts effeminate and faint?
> (1T. 5.1.174-177)

Such folly means effeminacy and weakness of character. He concludes instead that virtue alone brings glory and makes men truly noble. It must be remembered, at this point, that virtue in Tamburlaine's mind, has nothing to do with having respect for human emotions or affections, or for the suffering which his decisions can bring about. Tamburlaine's virtue, or virtù, is above and beyond such considerations. Thus Zenocrate is relegated to the position of being an object of beauty only, but yet necessary to Tamburlaine in the pursuit of his honour in war. Is it any wonder that she has so little to say in the scene of the coronation? In this scene, Zenocrate speaks twice, once to express her joy at seeing her father safe, and, the second time, in answer to Tamburlaine's assurance that Zenocrate will surely satisfy him and her father by becoming his queen. She laconically replies: "Els should I much forget my self, my Lord" (1T. 5.1.500), a line reminiscent of the cruel scenes she has just witnessed, the fate of Damascus and the suicidal deaths of Bajazet and Zabina, tokens of Tamburlaine's irrevocable measures. There is nothing else for her to do for her own safety as well as for that of her father but to submit to Tamburlaine's wishes.

The next time, when Zenocrate appears on the scene (2T. 1.3), she is the

mother of three sons. While she begs her husband to cease his wars and the risks of wounds these wars entail, Tamburlaine is concentrating his efforts on turning his sons, who are "too dainty for the wars" (2T. 1.3.28), into full-fledged soldiers. Already Calyphas would prefer the company of his mother rather than face the dangers of battle (2T. 1.3.65-68). Zenocrate's instinctive love for peace has failed to influence Tamburlaine but will, nevertheless, persist to some extent in her sons, especially in Calyphas in whom this love is made to appear like a loathsome vice.

One may conclude that normally human affections do not prevail on Tamburlaine. He remains deaf to Zenocrate's wishes on behalf of her countrymen; he even remains deaf when she begs him for his own sake to put a stop to his wars. Tamburlaine's love for Zenocrate has no power to alter his decisions or his destiny. She holds practically no sway over his will when it comes to changing his course of action. Since this is the one and only interest in Tamburlaine's life, Zenocrate's influence, except for her beauty as a stimulant to warfare, is almost totally reduced to non-existence. Tamburlaine does spare her father but possibly much more for reasons of self-interest than out of regard for her feelings or fears for her father. The death of the Soldan might have meant the end of Zenocrate as well, a thought intolerable to Tamburlaine, as one may suppose from his reactions to her death in the second part of the play.[146] In order that he may preserve the Zenocrate whom he loves he has to spare her father. He saves Zenocrate in this instance; nevertheless, she always stands second to his love of war, the first of his priorities.

Calyphas's defection is the next major challenge put to Tamburlaine and to his ethics of warfare. Already Calyphas's preferences for a life of peace in the company of his mother have been condemned by his father. Calyphas's interests in wanton ways and play would be met with the same kind of disapproval

---

146. See 2T. 2.4.78 ff. and 2T. 3.2.1-52.

if one judges from the warnings his brothers give him. They already object to his being lazy (2T. 4.1.7), much given to sleep (2T. 4.1.11), and, in this manner, dishonouring manhood and his name (2T. 4.1.32). When Tamburlaine becomes aware that Calyphas has kept away from the battlefront, there is no other alternative for him but to slay him. Tamburlaine's commitment to war demands a total unconditional dedication to the exigencies of warfare at the cost of all or any other values. Indeed, by acting in this manner, Calyphas is not the true son of Tamburlaine any more as his father recognizes full well. Tamburlaine had already implied that his true sons should reproduce the warring traits of their father, and should be scourges and terrors to the world. By turning away from the dictates of Tamburlaine, the equivalent of a god of war, Calyphas is guilty of some kind of earthly idolatry, of even a blasphemous contempt for the wishes of his godly father. The foolish disregard of his father's teaching[147] can mean only death for Calyphas. Tamburlaine's world of war must be purged of the presence of an element so foreign to the spirit of war,[148] of this element of peace which Calyphas has become and which Tamburlaine cannot tolerate. By his defection Calyphas has become an "image of sloth" (2T. 4.1.91), "a picture of a slave" (2T. 4.1.91) to his inclinations for peace, a blot on the renown and honour of Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine admits he is "Wounded with shame, and kill'd with discontent" (2T. 4.1.94). Martial justice must prevail at any cost. To the horror of the spectators, Tamburlaine coldly slays his son "Wherein was neither corrage, strength or wit, / But follie, sloth, and

147. The book of Proverbs affirms that "a foolish sonne is the calamitie of his father"; see G.V., Prov. 19:13.

148. Tamburlaine had purposely invited his sons to wash their hands all at once in his blood (see 2T. 3.2.126-127). In view of the numerous Biblical texts on the subject of blood as a morally cleansing agent, Tamburlaine's gesture may have been a symbolic cleansing of the spirit of his sons. On the power of the blood of Christ to wash away moral evil, see G.V., Acts 19:3, n. (b). On the act of washing as a symbol of innocence, see also Deut. 21:6; Job, 9:30; Psa. 26:6; 51:2,7; 73:13; etc.

if one judges from the warnings his brothers give him. They already object to his being lazy (2T. 4.1.7), much given to sleep (2T. 4.1.11), and, in this manner, dishonouring manhood and his name (2T. 4.1.32). When Tamburlaine becomes aware that Calyphas has kept away from the battlefront, there is no other alternative for him but to slay him. Tamburlaine's commitment to war demands a total unconditional dedication to the exigencies of warfare at the cost of all or any other values. Indeed, by acting in this manner, Calyphas is not the true son of Tamburlaine any more as his father recognizes full well. Tamburlaine had already implied that his true sons should reproduce the warring traits of their father, and should be scourges and terrors to the world. By turning away from the dictates of Tamburlaine, the equivalent of a god of war, Calyphas is guilty of some kind of earthly idolatry, of even a blasphemous contempt for the wishes of his godly father. The foolish disregard of his father's teaching[147] can mean only death for Calyphas. Tamburlaine's world of war must be purged of the presence of an element so foreign to the spirit of war,[148] of this element of peace which Calyphas has become and which Tamburlaine cannot tolerate. By his defection Calyphas has become an "image of sloth" (2T. 4.1.91), "a picture of a slave" (2T. 4.1.91) to his inclinations for peace, a blot on the renown and honour of Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine admits he is "Wounded with shame, and kill'd with discontent" (2T. 4.1.94). Martial justice must prevail at any cost. To the horror of the spectators, Tamburlaine coldly slays his son "Wherein was neither corrage, strength or wit, / But follie, sloth, and

---

147. The book of Proverbs affirms that "a foolish sonne is the calamitie of his father"; see G.V., Prov. 19:13.

148. Tamburlaine had purposely invited his sons to wash their hands all at once in his blood (see 2T. 3.2.126-127). In view of the numerous Biblical texts on the subject of blood as a morally cleansing agent, Tamburlaine's gesture may have been a symbolic cleansing of the spirit of his sons. On the power of the blood of Christ to wash away moral evil, see G.V., Acts 19:3, n. (b). On the act of washing as a symbol of innocence, see also Deut. 21:6; Job, 9:30; Psa. 26:6; 51:2,7; 73:13; etc.

damned idlenesse"(2T. 4.1.125-126). A defection of this kind was totally intolerable in the realm of a god of war.[149] If Tamburlaine wished to preserve his status as a war deity, there was no other option for him but to exterminate this presence of slothful peace which had suddenly made its appearance. The scene is ironic to the utmost degree. Tamburlaine is already "kill'd with discontent" by Calyphas's defection. The slaying of Calyphas is tantamount to slaying himself as the following words show:

> Here Jove, receive his fainting soule againe,
> A Forme not meet to give that subject essence,
> Whose matter is the flesh of Tamburlain,
> Wherein an incorporeall spirit mooves,
> Made of the mould whereof thy selfe consists
> which makes me valiant, proud, ambitious.
> (2T. 4.1.111-116)

Tamburlaine becomes his own victim in the person of his son. The slaying of Calyphas is a second stroke in his own flesh; it somewhat annuls the Tamburlaine-God of war identity symbolized by the previous slashing of his arm. It is a desperate and last attempt to save his self-deified being from total infamy. Just as to entertain notions of yielding to the power of beauty was tantamount to harbouring "thoughts effeminate and faint" (1T. 5.1.177), so now to spare "this effeminate brat" (2T. 4.1.162) would be a betrayal of Tamburlaine to his code of war. Clemency has no place in Tamburlaine's world; indeed, he reminds his listeners that he was not "Crown'd and invested by the hand of Jove. / For deeds of bounty or nobility" (2T. 4.1.151), nobility being understood, in this instance, as expressions of kindness or gestures of pardon. Thus Tamburlaine's values of war have triumphed over the most legitimate of affections, that of a father for his son but at the cost of his own being present in his son. By his

---

149. Tamburlaine blames Jove for having given a soul to Calyphas which is no match for one "whose matter is the flesh of Tamburlaine" (see 2T. 4.1.113). Perhaps Marlowe wanted to bring out the fact that Calyphas was not dedicated body and soul to Tamburlaine's warfare in the way that God expects his to serve him. "For God as he is the Creator of the soule and bodie, so wil he that both two serue him ...": see G.V., Psa. 149:2, n. (o).

rash decision, Tamburlaine has proved himself consistent and true to the standards of war set by himself as well as to those set by Mahomet, for the latter holds virtues of peace effeminate and does banish them like vices from his state.[150] Calyphas has been exterminated for his sloth in warfare. But, by the same token, Tamburlaine has dealt himself a serious blow and his image as a god of war has lost much of its power. Events will soon prove that he is but a man.

There is one final session in Tamburlaine's teaching against the dangers of effeminacy. Tamburlaine warns Amyras not to let his love sacrifice his honour, "Nor bar thy mind that magnanimitie, / That nobly must admit necessity" (2T. 5.3.200-201) in the exercise of his authority as Tamburlaine's successor to the throne. Was Tamburlaine reminiscing how he had refused to let his love for Zenocrate interfere with his sense of honour as a conqueror? Was he remembering how he had given an extraordinary example of magnanimous fortitude by boldly sacrificing his eldest son in a desperate attempt to save the integrity of his warfare? Tamburlaine goes on in his counsels to Amyras. His son must be ready to accomplish deeds of cruelty, to bridle the Turkish kings in this case if need be. "So, raigne my sonne, scourge and controlle these slaves, / Guiding thy chariot with thy Fathers hand" (2T. 5.3.228-229) is Tamburlaine's advice to Amyras. He speaks of the dangers of swaying a throne so dangerous. Tamburlaine's sense of total dedication, his single-purposed warfare, the purity of his spirit which allows nothing to interfere with the matter of waging war and of controlling the vanquished is spelt out more clearly in his last speech. He tells Amyras: "If thy body thrive not full of thoughtes / As pure and fiery as Phyteus beames" (2T. 5.3.236-237), rebellious factions symbolized by "these proud rebelling Jades" (2T. 5.3.238) will seize the least occasion to destroy him. If Amyras is to succeed, he must act by the standards set by his father

---

150. Grosart, ed. cit., n. 9, "A Treatie of Warres", vol. 2, p. 109, stanza 17.

for Tamburlaine adds: "The nature of thy chariot will not beare / A guide of baser temper then my selfe" (2T. 5.3.242-243). Amyras must not act like Phaeton who ignored his father's advice and met with disaster (2T. 5.3.242-244) but, instead, he must be a worthy successor to Tamburlaine.

Thus the sacrifices imposed by Tamburlaine's religion of war reveal the extent to which Tamburlaine's creed exacted a total commitment to the ideals of the battlefront. There was no place for the gentle virtues of mercy and kindness; human emotions were ruled out as alien forces forbidden to exercise any influence whatever on Tamburlaine's policies unless these emotions were to favour war. There was room only for the moral virtue of fortitude and courage, for the strength of character required to perform the acts necessary to preserve the ideals of war no matter how great the cost. The love of a husband for his wife, the affection of a father for his son, the compassion in face of suffering: all these human values faded into irrelevance before the demands of Tamburlaine's concepts of war. Only the pure unalloyed drive for warfare could survive in the set of norms determined by Tamburlaine's fiery spirit of war. In all these respects, Tamburlaine's standards were worthy of those set by Mahomet as Greville describes them. One may add that they were equally absurd.

IV

Tamburlaine has been described as a destructive force at work spreading ruin and destruction on the face of this earth. It has also been said that Marlowe's attempts to give a dramatic dimension to Tamburlaine through characterization is not altogether successful. Tamburlaine does not appear as an individual living the range of human experiences contingent to life even to a life spent on the battlefront. However, Marlowe does structure a few scenes in his play which allow the audience to have a glimpse into the forces which dominate the hero and into the impact of these forces on the characters he comes in contact with in the play. Some of these scenes have already been analysed. The dramatic and religious significance of Tamburlaine's slashing of his arm has been studied.[151] The demands of Tamburlaine's code of honour in the context of his mission have been pointed out in the study of the scene in which Tamberlaine slays his son.[152] The symbolic relevance of Tamburlaine's burning of the Koran has been analysed.[153] There remain two scenes which merit special attention. Mahomet's style of life as a militant leader striving to implant his religion had been summed up by Greville in the terse phrase: "His court, a camp".[154] There remains to note the traits of Tamburlaine's style of court and camp.

One aspect of Tamburlaine's methods of warfare is the kind of sieges which he carries out to capture any city lying in his path. These sieges are conducted according to a fixed pattern which is akin to a ritual of warfare. A messenger

---

151. See above, pp. 370 ff.

152. See above, pp. 412 ff.

153. See above, pp. 316 ff.

154. Grosart, ed. cit., n. 9, "A Treatie of Warres", vol. 2, p. 109, stanza 17.

warning the Egyptian Soldan of the impending danger which lies at his gates describes the plan followed by Tamburlaine whose "resolution far exceedeth all" (1T. 4.1.148). He says:

> The first day when he pitcheth downe his tentes,
> white is their hew, and on his silver crest
> A snowy Feather spangled white as beares,
> To signify the mildnesse of his minde,
> That satiate with spoile refuseth blood,
> But when Aurora mounts the second time,
> As red as scarlet is his furniture,
> Then must his kindled wrath bee quencht with blood,
> Not sparing any that can manage armes.
> But if these threats moove not submission,
> Black are his collours, blacke Pavilion,
> His speare, his shield, his horse, his armour, plumes,
> And Jetty Feathers menace death and hell.
> Without respect of Sex, degree or age,
> He raceth all his foes with fire and sword.
> (1T. 4.1.49-63)

The details of this description are confirmed in Tamburlaine's own words in the following scene.[155]

One is struck by the solemnity of the occasion, the awesome character of Tamburlaine in these sieges, both of which betray the inflexible will of the Scythian despot. All these factors are made real by the set style in which the sieges are carried out. However, the first comment to be made about this description is that, except for the transformation of the source material into dramatic poetry, it is not of Marlowe's invention. He could have found this description of Tamburlaine's sieges in many chronicles of his day.[156] Nevertheless, Marlowe chose to incorporate this material about Tamburlaine's sieges much as they were described in the chronicles of his day. The second point to be made is that the historical accounts of Timur's campaigns describe no such method of holding sieges. Indeed, some of the chroniclers and translators of the histories of Timur consider this system of days labelled by colours symbolic

---

155. See 1T. 4.2.111-122

156. See above, pp. 107 ff.

of the measures to be taken on that particular day to be sheer nonsense. Nevertheless, what better manner of capturing the aura of irrevocable and arbitrary despotism associated with Tambulaine than by fashioning his sieges according to set patterns of extermination executed with a kind of symbolic ritualism. Tamburlaine's activities are thus transformed into a form of ritualistic homage worthy of a deity. Decorum, deeds ushered in to the rhythm of time, symbolic colours, all contribute to create awe, solemnity, dread, paralysing fear, mystery around a distant inflexible will as relentless as time, as phenomena of nature, and as fate. Nothing could deter this colossal deity from his predetermined course of action. Dimension and impact are thus built into an incident which should be just a normal occurrence in the course of hostilities. What factors may possibly have been instrumental in determining the form which chroniclers eventually gave to incidents normal to the course of warfare?

The idea of labelling each day of the siege with one of a specific set of colours, white, red, or black, each symbolic of the extent of pillaging and extermination to be carried out on that day, may have been inspired by Moslem or Arabian legends which possibly had made their way to the chronicler's ear. A story is told in connection with the destruction of the Adites, one of the Islamic sects which seemingly had suddenly disappeared as a result of God's vengeance.[157] Three clouds of destruction had been offered as agents of annihilation in the firmament, white, red, and black. Black had been chosen, the consequence of which choice had been total destruction for the Adites.[158]

---

157. The tribe of Ad is mentioned in the Koran: see J.M. Rodwell, trans. and ed., The Koran (London, 1974 reprinted ed.), p. 300, sura 7:63. A note tells how the Adites along with another tribe lay to the north of Mecca in the direct north and south line of traffic, both tribes probably disappearing with the cessation of the traffic. The traditions adopted by Muhammad attributed this disappearance to divine vengeance and were derived by him from the popular legends of the Arabs: see ibid., p. 300, n.

158. See E.M. Wherry, A Comprehensive Commentary on the Qur'an: comprising Sale's translation and Preliminary Discourse ... (London, 1884), vol. 2, p. 218, n.

Had details of this legend made their way to the chronicler's pen and coloured the nature of Tamburlaine's decisions for each of the three days of the siege?

According to the chroniclers and, thereby, the play, the nature and extent of destruction to be carried out on each of the three days of the siege was planned by Tamburlaine. Could the laws of warfare set down by God for the use of Moses and Israel, also have inspired the chroniclers to pattern Tamburlaine's sieges as they did? These were put into effect by Moses as a necessary condition to obtain the benefits of the help of God in his campaigns. The plan which was to be followed by Moses is outlined as follows:

> When thou commest nygh vnto a city to fyght agaynst it, offer them peace. And if they answeare thee agayne peaceably, and open vnto thee, then let al the people that is found therin, be tributaries vnto thee, and serue thee.
> And if they wyl make no peace with thee, but make warre agaynst thee, thou shalt besiege it.
> And when the Lorde thy God hath deliuered it into thyne handes, thou shalt smyte al the males thereof with the edge of the swoorde. But the women, and the chyldren, and the cattel, and al that is in the citie, and al the spoyle thereof, shalt thou take vnto thee selfe, and eate the spoyle of thyne enimies, whiche the Lorde thy God hath geuen thee.
> Thus shalt thou doo vnto al the cities whiche are a great way of from thee, whiche are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these nations, whiche the Lorde thy God shal geue thee to inherit, thou shalt saue aliue nothing that breatheth. But shalt destroy them without redemption, namely the Hethites, the Amorites, ... as the Lord thy God hath commaunded thee.[159]

The offer of peace which, if accepted, makes the city a servile tributary to the conqueror recalls Tamburlaine's offers of peace when he comes to a new city about to be taken. Moses is instructed to besiege a city which refuses peace in the same way as Tamburlaine does. The destruction of males only in distant cities in contrast with the extermination of everyone plus the confiscation of the spoils from the cities of the neighbouring idolatrous nations is transposed in Tamburlaine's warfare into the extermination to be carried out on the second and third days of the sieges. Thus a comparison of the plans followed by Israel with Tamburlaine's methods, as outlined by the messenger to the Soldan, seems

---

159. B.V., Deut. 20:10-17.

to point to the possibility that the Mosaic campaigns may have inspired the chroniclers who imposed a pattern upon Tamburlaine's ritualistic three-day sieges. The same character of merciless destruction is kept. Since Tamburlaine is interested in possessing all the lands and cities he conquers, he is spared the necessity of making distinctions such as Israel makes between the distant cities and those they wish to inherit. All the conquests of Tamburlaine fall into the latter category. They, thereby, enjoy the same fate as did the Canaanites whose major offence seems to have been that they were occupying the land which was wanted by Israel. So does this seem to be the major offence, along with suggestions of idolatry, of many of the peoples Tamburlaine conquers. It may be pointed out that Saint Paul qualifies this law of Moses as the law of death,[160] an apt description for Tamburlaine's law.

Chroniclers would in this way have respected the Moslem origin of Tamburlaine. They would also indirectly have paid tribute to the Messianic quality of Tamburlaine as a saviour, a quality shared by Moses and by Israel as a nation. As Moses had saved the people of God, so did Tamburlaine's campaigns save Christendom. Christians were prone to draw analogies between their situation in face of the Turkish threat and that of Israel oppressed by the Egyptians.[161] Possibly, the analogy had gradually attached itself to the great name of Tamburlaine.

Thus the unearthly, almost divine, stature of the Timur of history would seem to have inspired the awe which the chroniclers tried to create around the legendary figure of Tamerlane by transforming the hero's onslaughts into some patterned form of war ritual. The method of extermination itself may possibly have been suggested by that of Moses, one of the major Biblical heroes, the story of whom had always been a favourite. Would this similarity in methods of

---

160. See G.V., 2 Cor. 3:7 and n. (g).

161. See above, pp. 252 ff. and notes.

warfare point to the influence of certain Christian thought patterns which some critics claim they detect in the metamorphosis the historical warrior underwent as his story was put to pen by successive chroniclers?

If the dramatist drew upon the accounts of the chroniclers to describe Tamburlaine's three-day sieges, the scene of the martial banquet contains more than what Marlowe could have found in the chronicles. Much of it is of the dramatist's invention. The place it occupies in the play, the meaning which apparently it is meant to convey is of Marlowe's creation. Besides providing pertinent insights into the hero whom the dramatist was trying to create, the scene opens Tamburlaine's court to the probing eye of the audience and reveals just what might be happening in Tamburlaine's camp whenever the warrior "pitcheth downe his tentes" (1T. 4.1.49). The banquet scene is unquestionably the highlight at least of the first part of the play; in the second part of Tamburlaine, the hero will express by his deeds the spiritual character which seems to define itself during the banquet scene. For these reasons, the scene merits some attention.

As has been mentioned before, Tamburlaine's appearance on the world scene arrested the Islamic onslaught. To the European observer, therefore, the Islamic dimension of Tamburlaine was quite different from and incompatible with the Islamic dimension of the Turks. One had proved a saviour; the other a deadly threat. The consequence was that, under the pen of the Christian chronicler, Tamburlaine had gradually shed his Islamic traits. Nevertheless, Tamburlaine was not a Christian. There was left but one option, that of making him a pagan retaining or acquiring certain Christian characteristics. Consequently, there emerges a three-dimensional picture of Tamburlaine. The first reflects the hostile and destructive relationship of Tamburlaine with Islam, the second focuses on the emerging pagan identity of Tamburlaine while the third points to the impact of the first two aspects of Tamburlaine upon the Christian world. Marlowe's discerning dramatization of Tamburlaine as a character could have kept these three dimensions in mind. Indeed, these dimensions seem to play especially

significant roles in the martial feast presided by Tamberlaine. While Battenhouse's statement that the martial banquet is "appropriate ritual for hallowing the falseReligion of War"[162] is valid to some extent, there is more to this scene than just that. In the main, the banquet is an episode during which Tamburlaine's religion of war is firmly established supplanting the Islamic faith of Mahomet. The Christian connotations which Battenhouse detects add up to more than just portraying "Paganism's unconscious travesty of The Lord's Supper"[163] or "presenting spectacularly the moral significance of an anti-Christ's career".[164] Marlowe had to dramatize in some way the links between Tamburlaine's career and the Christian faith whose cause the historical Timur had so unwittingly but so adequately served. Marlowe coined into one scene the triple image of Tamburlaine. The hero as the providential agent of God had acted out his part as a pagan challenging the idolatrous Turks for the benefit of Christendom. Marlowe depicts the three-dimensional role of Tamburlaine by incorporating Moslem, pagan, and Christian elements in a most subtle manner in the scene of the martial banquet presided by Tamburlaine.

Feasts are mentioned several times in Tamburlaine[165] but only one of them is given the importance accorded to Tamburlaine's martial banquet. Undoubtedly, this feast played a key position in the overall plot. Firstly, this banquet comes soon after Tamburlaine has solemnly declared himself as the Scourge of God (1T. 3.3.44 ff.), with the special mission of defeating the Turk and liberating the Christians enslaved by the Turks. Secondly, Marlowe chooses Bajazet's defeat, a defeat which at the same time signifies a deadly blow to Mahomet, as the occasion for the banquet. Tamburlaine orders his men: "For

---

162. See above, p. 351.

163. See above, p. 350.

164. See above, p. 351.

165. See 2T. 1.1.165; 1.3.218, 225; 3.2.106.

this happy conquest / Triumph, and solemnize a martiall feast" (1T. 3.3.272-273). Thirdly, Marlowe inserts this feast within the three-day siege of Damascus as a part of it. The banquet is set against the foreboding gloom which hangs over the Damascenes. It precedes the massacre of the Virgins of Damascus, a massacre which has an altogether different resonance in the play than had the sieges prior to this scene. While the latter could justifiably constitute a part of Tamburlaine's necessary initiatives in order that he may consolidate his position as a monarch, the massacre of the Virgins of Damascus brings to the attention of the audience Tamburlaine's unnecessary cruelty in its stark reality. This scene cannot help but strongly suggest that this sort of deed may become a matter of routine for the rest of Tamburlaine's career as it does become eventually. Thus the banquet scene definitely seems to be a transitional point in the play. It marks a dividing line or watershed between the career of Tamburlaine as it unfolds prior to this incident and that of Tamburlaine for the rest of the play. This scene symbolizes a kind of spiritual transformation in Tamburlaine which will determine to a large extent the future action of the hero. The Tamburlaine who rises from the banquet is different from the one who has hitherto been working his way up towards a position of power and rule symbolized by the "earthly crown".

Feasts and banquets occupy an important place in Christian tradition. They are interspersed throughout Scripture from the time Melchisedech organizes one as a token of friendship for Abraham[166] right through the history of Israel.[167]

---

166. Melchisedech prepares a feast of bread and wine for Abraham who has just returned after having slaughtered the confederate kings who had captured his brother. He is the first priest figure in the Bible, an antitype of the Christ-figure as King-Priest of God. Melchisedech's feast points to the Eucharistic Supper: see Gen. 14:1-19.

167. In passing, one might mention the banquet in the Book of Esther which bears some points of resemblance with Tamburlaine's martial banquet: see 5:4; 7:1. See also Song of Solomon 2:4; Dan. 5; Amos 6:7; 3 Esdras 3:1, etc. For all the regular feasts which occurred every year, see OCC.art."Feasts"pp. 115-116. Instances of eating, drinking, and making merry are several: see I Kgs. 1:25; 4:20; 1 Chr. 12:39; 29:22; etc.

They are a recurring theme in the New Testament.[168] The Messianic age is presented as a continual wedding banquet, a combination of various themes of the banquet symbol as it occurs in the Old and New Testaments. Paschal or covenant banquets, nuptial meals, the Last Supper, including the eschatological feasts of the Book of Revelation,[169] are all part of the Biblical banquet theme. In fact, one favourite image of Christian tradition used to illustrate the eternal bliss of heaven was that of the banquet.

Banquets in the old civilizations were special and solemn occasions. To be invited to a banquet was a great and coveted honour; it gave the guest access to the host's private life by offering the opportunity to share his style of life while taking part in his lavish board. Hosts often seized upon these occasions to display their wealth and to shower rewards and honours on their devoted friends. An invitation to such banquets could be the door to a new life for the guest. The partaking of the same food had a spiritual significance in the ancient civilizations. There were sacred overtones to the act of consuming the same dishes together with the host. In the same way that eating of the same food created a common physical bond between the guests, so did the act create a spiritual fellowship between them. In some ways, sharing the same food produced a physical oneness which promoted a oneness in spirit. Little surprising is it that Christ should have chosen this form of activity to symbolize the spiritual unity which he hoped to achieve with and among his disciples.[170] On the other hand, on several occasions, Scriptural texts warned

---

168. One verse out of many dealing with this theme is as follows: "And in this mountayne shal the Lorde of hostes make vnto al the people a feast of plenteous and delicate thinges, euen of the most pleasant and daintie dishes": B.V., Isa. 25:6. The verse is interpreted as the "Church which shulde vnder Christ be assembled of the Iewes and the Gentiles, and is here described vnder the figure of a costely banquet": G.V., Isa. 25:6, n. (h).

169. See Raymond E. Brown, S.S., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm., eds., The Jerome Biblical Commentary (London, 1968), vol. 2: Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., Raymond E. Brown, S.S., eds. The New Testament and Topical Articles. p. 134.

170. See Matt. 26:26; Mk. 14:22; Luke 22:19.

of the danger of sharing the dainty meats with an evil host.[171] Such sharing was equivalent to a participation in the evil promoted by the host.

All banquets in Holy Scriptures, whether they were meant to celebrate victories, weddings, or the reunion of friends or relatives, pointed to the Eucharistic Banquet of the Lord on the eve of his death. There are details in Tamburlaine's banquet which unmistakably suggest that Marlowe meant Tamburlaine's feast to have overtones evoking some aspects of the Last Supper.

The Last Supper marked a turning point in the spiritual history of Israel, a change from the old form of allegiance to God to a new one. Its central event, the transubstantiation of the bread and wine and the partaking of these had been foreseen and prepared by centuries of history in Israel. This central event opened out a new perception of life and the world, as it was expounded in the New testament, and marked the transition between the covenants of the Old Testament and that of the New. These three phases of the Last Supper, that is, the preparation, the fact, and the effect were all centred on the idea of sacrifice. The Last Supper drew its real spiritual significance from the background of the Old Testament sacrifices of beasts leading up to it and from a new form of self-sacrifice initiated by Christ's offering of his life which was mysteriously linked with the sharing of the bread and wine at the Supper. In addition to these considerations, the Last Supper could not be divorced from the notion of a presiding high-priest. The sharing of bread and wine had been ushered into the history of Israel by the high-priest Melchisedech. Sacrificial rites had been conducted subsequently by the Levitical priests. Christ, the mediatorial High-Priest, brought the past sacrificial history to a climax and heralded the new form of worship. The three facets of the Last Supper merged the past and the future into the present rite.

Marlowe's martial banquet could be a parody of the three aspects of the Last Supper and, in its own way and in the world of Tamburlaine, could point to a transition from the former order to the new, a kind of Passover. The whole

---

171. See below, pp. 435 ff.

scene revolves around three centres of interest, each one intermittently drawing the attention of the audience. Chronologically, they are, first, the presence of the defeated Bajazet, a visible climax to all the events which have led up to this moment and a symbol of the end of the old order, that of the undisputed sway of Islam; secondly, the martial banquet itself; thirdly, the impending fate of Damascus as an indication of what may be expected under the rule of the new Tamburlaine. The three centres of interest form a triptych in which can be read the main characteristics of the past, the present, and the future under the domination of Tamburlaine. The three centres are linked to the theme of sacrifice, the banquet marking the transition in its forms. Because of its place as a theme common to all aspects, the emphasis in this study will be laid on the role of sacrifice in this scene.

The word "sacrifice" is first mentioned by Bajazet in connection with his priests who cut and slice their flesh as an homage to Mahomet. The idolatrous connotations in connection with this scene have already been fully analysed and need not be re-examined here.[172] The traits of Mahomet which assimilate him to an idol, his sleepiness, his deafness to pleas, have also been brought to the attention of the reader.[173] Mahomet's helplessness to save Bajazet from the humiliations meted out to him during his captivity has been pointed out. In short, the text displays a considerable effort on the part of the dramatist to make the theme of idolatry in relation to Bajazet and Mahomet quite prominent. Consequently, as has been mentioned before,[174] by Biblical standards, Tamburlaine becomes fully justified in carrying on a merciless extermination against Bajazet and his like. This explains the mission Tamburlaine takes upon himself just before he goes to battle against the Turk, of being "the Scourge and Wrath of God" (1T. 3.3.44). The scene explains how the defeat of Bajazet is symbolic of the blow

---

172. See above, pp. 271 ff.

173. See above, pp. 307-308.

174. See above, pp. 346-348.

Tamburlaine has struck against the idolatry of Bajazet and, by extension, of Islam.

Marlowe could well have inferred in the banquet scene other connotations as well of the Biblical sacrificial practices. Mahomet's priests staining the altars with their own blood could have evoked the whole Biblical panorama of the sacrificial slaying of animals,[175] of the sprinkling of the blood of the victims upon and around altars.[176] Numerous are the Biblical texts on this subject. Overtones related to the Biblical practice of sacrificing animals and to all that accompanies this ritual do not seem to be altogether absent from the banquet scene. One wonders whether Marlowe, under the disguise of crude taunts, does not attempt to bring together aspects of this ritual with the idolatrous practices connected with Bajazet and use them to cast the Turk into the mould of "beastly madness" proper to idolaters and suggestive of his sacrificial function.

During the banquet scene as well as in the preceding scene with Bajazet, Tamburlaine does more than enough to degrade the Turk to the level of a beast. As related in the chroniclers, Tamburlaine keeps him in a cage, uses him as a beast of burden and as a footstool to climb up on his throne. Even Tamburlaine's show of concern for Bajazet is degrading in the extreme. He inquires about whether the Turk has been fed[177] or watered (1T. 4.4.55) in the same way that the

---

175. Sacrifices are mentioned frequently in the Old Testament. Almost without exception they involve the offering of animals as victims: see Gen. 31:54; Exod. 18:12; Lev. 4:10; 23:19; Num. 6:17; 7:88; Deut. 12:27; Josh; 22:27; Judges 6:26; 1 Sam. 1:21; 2 Sam. 15:12; 1 Kgs. 8:5; 2 Kgs. 16:15, etc.

176. Several texts similar to the following can be found in the Old Testament: "And Moses tooke half of the blood, and put it in basins, and the other halfe he sprinckled on the aulter" B.V., Exod. 24:6. Also "... and the blood of thyne offerynges shalbe powred out vpon the aulter of the Lorde thy God": B.V., Deut. 12:27. See also Exod. 29:16, 20; Lev. 1:5, 11; 3:2; 8:11; Num. 18:17; 2 Kgs. 16:13; 2 Chr. 29:22; etc.

177. This appears later in the play: see 1T. 5.1.192. However, this line could easily fit in the banquet scene although some lines seem to indicate that Tamburlaine is deliberately torturing the starving Bajazet with the sight of abundant victuals inaccessible to the Turk: see 1T. 4.4.10 ff., 34-35.

owner of a choice animal would be concerned about its welfare. The effect of Tamburlaine's taunts is that Bajazeth soon behaves in a manner true to what Tamburlaine is trying to make of him. Bajazeth becomes beastlike in his reactions. He stamps on his food out of sheer rage (1T. 4.4.42); he would willingly feed upon the blood-raw heart of Tamburlaine (1T. 4.4.11-12) as would any voracious animal; he enjoys the thought of Tamburlaine being torn in pieces by a legion of devils (1T. 4.4.38). Allusions, cruelly ironic in tone and meaning, are made about the proper time to kill being when the victim is fat (1T. 4.4.48), about the necessity of being dieted and of avoiding excessive eating (1T. 4.4. 103-104), about the harmful effects of fretting upon the flesh of animals (1T. 4.4.49-51), and about the practice of walking animals and of giving them some exercise (1T.4.4.105-106). All these are points which need consideration in the care of an animal destined for human consumption as was the victim in the Passover ritual. That this idea may have been present in Marlowe's mind is not altogether impossible when note is made of the number of times the ideas of eating their own flesh or each other's recur in the scene in connection with Bajazet and Zabina.[178] These recalled the extreme punishments inflicted by the wrathful God of Israel upon his rebellious people.[179] By these words, Tamburlaine's wrath evokes that of God and gives a sense of righteousness to the Scythian as he fulfils his mission as the wrath of God. Tamburlaine's crude threats to Bajazet; "I will make thee slice the brawnes of thy armes into carbonadoes, and eat them" (1T. 4.4.43-44) could carry both idolatrous and Biblical overtones. These words tauntingly allude to the idolatrous practices of the priests of Mahomet slicing their flesh as mentioned before.[180] They could also allude to the

---

178. See 1T. 4.4.36-37, 43-44, 45 ff.

179. Conditions shall be so trying that "euery man shal eate the fleashe of his owne arme": B.V., Isa. 9:19. The Geneva Bible adds this note: "Their griedines shal be insatiable so that one brother shal eat vp another, as though he shulde eat his owne flesh": G.V., Isa. 9:20, n. (r). See also below, pp. 589 ff.

180. See above, pp. 271 ff.

Biblical custom of eating the roasted flesh of the sacrificial victim during the feast of the Passover, a symbol of the Last Supper.[181] It could be that the violent Bajazet was simply a substitute for or a parallel to the traditional lamb of the Passover.

Be that as it may, Bajazet's role as a victim seems to imply much more than just being a target for Tamburlaine's cruel taunts. The little food he is offered is served at sword's point and, ironically, must be accepted under the threat of death, or "Ile thrust it to thy heart" (1T. 4.4.41-42), says Tamburlaine. The words and antics of Tamburlaine make of the Turk an all-but-slain or sacrificed animal. However, for Tamburlaine's purposes, as he explains himself, Bajazet degraded to the level of a violent beast, is better suited to play the role of a living victim, a live war trophy (1T. 4.4.57-58) preserved for the honour of the God of war whose religion of wrath, hatred, and destruction is being inaugurated in this scene. Tamburlaine's banquet is significant to the extent that his major opponent has been subdued, victimized, and even sacrificed. Bajazet pays the price with the loss of his freedom and of his life eventually for the glory of Tamburlaine's power.

The sacrificial dimension of Bajazet is enhanced by the setting of the banquet itself. The language used to initiate the martial banquet is one of blood and bloody colours. Tamburlaine announces: "Now hang our bloody collours by Damascus / Reflexing hewes of blood upon their heads" (1T. 4.4.1-2). Colour and staging set the tone of the moment. One may visualize the towering Tamburlaine all dressed in scarlet (1T. 4.4.s.d.) standing in the opening of the scarlet coloured tent and presiding over his banquet. The whole scene is symbolic of the bloodshed to come. Bajazet the victim is thus set against the prospects of

---

181. This crude taunt is possibly meant to associate this scene with moments of the Last Supper when Christ promises eternal life to those who will eat his flesh: see John 6:51, 54, 55. Or it may recall the burnt offerings of the Old Testament as mentioned in the following: "And thou shalt offer thy burnt offeringes, both fleashe and blood vpon the aulter of the Lorde thy God: ... and thou shalt eate the fleashe": B.V., Deut. 12:27.

the sacrificed victims of Damascus. The atmosphere is one of intense fear, the effect of the wrath of Tamburlaine (1T. 4.4.4). The banquet obviously is taking place on the second day of the siege of Damascus, a day when, like a despotic God of war, Tamburlaine's "kindled wrath /must/ bee quencht with blood" (1T. 4.1.56).

The banquet is conducted in two parts. At the opening, Tamburlaine invites his guests to "freely banquet and carouse / Full bowles of wine unto the God of war" (1T. 4.4.5-6). To an audience familiar with and sensitive to Biblical texts, the word "wine" could not but evoke other terms normally associated with it, that is, words like "vines", "cluster", "grape" and "raisin". Marlowe had already used the term "cluster" in a high moment of the play. Tamburlaine had boasted of the fall of Bajazet in these words: "The pillers that have bolstered up those tearmes, / Are falne in clusters at my conquering feet" (1T. 3.3.229-230). The word "cluster" could carry an architectural meaning which was perhaps intended by Marlowe. It could mean several pillars being grouped together to act as one.[182] The word "piller" was easily associated with kings and governors as supporters of the state.[183] In this sense, "tearmes" were the statues terminating the pillars.[184] In other words, Tamburlaine could mean that the pair, Bajazet and Zabina, the"tearmes" who had upheld the state of Islam had now crumbled at

---

182. The OED offers this explanation for "clustered pillars": "several slender pillars or shafts attached to each other so as to form one".

183. James, Peter, and John seemed to be the pillars of the early Church: see Gal. 2:9. These lines of Tamburlaine could also imply that Tamburlaine is another Samson shaking down the pillars of the Turkish sway: see Judges 16:29. In the passage "for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's and he hath set the world upon them", the pillars would seem to be princes of this world: see 1 Sam. 2:8.

184. Jump explains the word "terms" as follows: "A term is a statuary bust supported by a pillar out of which it seems to spring": see ed. cit., n.84, p. 60 n. Ezechiel writes about pillars falling down during the destruction of Tyre: "... he shal slay the people with the swoord, and the pillers of thy strength shal falle downe to the grounde": B.V., Ezek. 26:11. A note explains "pillars" as follows: "Some referre this vnto the images of the noble men which thei had erected vp for their glorie and renoume": G.V., Ezek. 26:11, n. (e).

his feet. Moreover, these lines happen to occur in the play in a context of exchanges of crowns. Tamburlaine, therefore, may possibly mean the crowns by the word "tearmes". These crowns had been upheld by the pillars Bajazet and Zabina and were therefore symbols of the rule of their Turkish empire. By extension, Tamburlaine was possibly thinking of other crowns as well. The crowns he had hitherto conquered, in a sense, had bolstered up those of the Turks. The latter could not be had without the ones Tamburlaine had reaped by the defeat of Mycetes and then of Cosroe. These successive clusters of pillars supporting each their term in the form of a crown had to fall before Tamburlaine could reach his present status of Monarch of the East. Furthermore, Tamburlaine was certainly laying emphasis on these "crowns" or"tearmes" falling to him in groups or "clusters" by including a symbolic second course of crowns in his banquet.

However, in view of the fact that this banquet of wine and cates inevitably recalled the Eucharistic supper, members of the audience who were familiar with and sensitive to Biblical texts, could readily associate vines, grapes, and raisin to the word "cluster" and all of these to the "bowles of wine". The word "cluster" in the Bible is used exclusively in connection with vines, grapes, and raisin, and is usually a symbol of abundance.[185] The word becomes particularly eloquent in the powerful language of the apocalyptic Vision of Armageddon presided over by the Son of Man. In this context, the word means the ripe harvest of the earth. The angel announces that it is time to "geather the clusters of the vineyarde of the earth, for her grapes are rype".[186] The altar

185. "And they came ... and cut down from there a branch with one cluster of grapes ...": Num. 13:23: "And the place was called the riuer of Escol, because of the clouster of grapes ...": B.V., Num. 13:24. See also Deut. 32:32. In 4 Esdras, there is this verse: "And I sawe ... a wineberie of grapes, and a plant of a great people" where the word "wineberie" is glossed as "grape of the cluster": B.V., 4 Esdras 9:21 and gloss. "Grape" and "cluster" are associated with people. Also in the same book is the following text: "For of all the people thou onely art left vs as a grape of the vine": G.V., 4 Esdras 12:42. The overthrow of the people is compared to a harvest in Isa. 16:9, also to a vintage in Isa. 16:10. See also G.V., Rev. 14:15, n. (t) for the association of the overthrow of a people with "harvest" and "vintage".

186. Rev. 14:18. See also Rev. 14:19. Elsewhere, we find: "... for the haruest is ripe ... for the winepresse is ful ...": Joel 3:13; by this passage is meant the destruction of the enemy: see G.V., Joel 3:13, n. (h).

in this scene was meant to be Christ who is also the Priest and sacrifice.[187] Ideas, in the Biblical texts, of winevats, wine, and grapes are transferred almost immediately to those of the wrath of God and of bloodshed[188] in such amounts that the blood reaches the bridles of the horses.[189] The Geneva Bible explains the expression "horse bridle" in these words: "By this similitude he declareth the horrible confusion of the tyrants and infideles, which delite in nothing but warres, slaughters, persecutions and effusion of blood".[190] Later in the same context, God hands out "the cup of the wine of the fiercenes of his wrath"[191] to the same city. Elsewhere in the Bible, expressions like "that thou mightest drinke the most pure blood of the grape"[192] are found. Finally, God exercising his judgment against Israel is described thus: "For in the hand of God there is a cup, and the wine is red: it is fully mixed, and he poureth out of the same",[193] to which verse the Geneva Version adds the following comment: "Gods wrath is compared to a cup of strong and delicate wine ...".[194] Thus,

---

187. See G.V., Rev. 14:18, n. (x).

188. Several passages in the Bible link the gathering of grapes with the destruction of people. In the dreams which the Pharaoh's baker and butler have while in prison, vine, clusters and grapes mean death: "And in the vine were three branches ...: and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes": Gen. 40:10. Elsewhere, the gleaning of grapes is also understood as the slaying of enemies: see B.V., Judges 8:2 and n. (a). Or again "... for the harvest is ripe": Rev. 14:15.

189. See Rev. 14:20

190. G.V., Rev. 14:20, n. (z).

191. G.V., Rev. 16:19. See also Rev. 14:10. We also find the following: "... the Lord powred out the drinke of his vengeance": G.V., Jer. 51:7, n. (d); "I give her cup into thine hand" to which the annotator has added the following comment: "I wil execute the same iudgements and vengeance against thee, and that with greater seueritie": G.V., Ezek. 23:31, n. (m).

192. B.V., Deut. 32:14. Also "He ... tooke of the drynke offeryng, and powred in of the wine": B.V., Ecclus. 50:15. Instead of "wine", the G.V. has "blood of the grape".

193. Psa. 75:8.

194. G.V., Psa. 75:8, n. (f). The effect of the cup is to utterly destroy the wicked.

in this scene was meant to be Christ who is also the Priest and sacrifice.[187] Ideas, in the Biblical texts, of winevats, wine, and grapes are transferred almost immediately to those of the wrath of God and of bloodshed[188] in such amounts that the blood reaches the bridles of the horses.[189] The Geneva Bible explains the expression "horse bridle" in these words: "By this similitude he declareth the horrible confusion of the tyrants and infideles, which delite in nothing but warres, slaughters, persecutions and effusion of blood".[190] Later in the same context, God hands out "the cup of the wine of the fiercenes of his wrath"[191] to the same city. Elsewhere in the Bible, expressions like "that thou mightest drinke the most pure blood of the grape"[192] are found. Finally, God exercising his judgment against Israel is described thus: "For in the hand of God there is a cup, and the wine is red: it is fully mixed, and he poureth out of the same",[193] to which verse the Geneva Version adds the following comment: "Gods wrath is compared to a cup of strong and delicate wine ...".[194] Thus,

---

187. See G.V., Rev. 14:18, n. (x).

188. Several passages in the Bible link the gathering of grapes with the destruction of people. In the dreams which the Pharaoh's baker and butler have while in prison, vine, clusters and grapes mean death: "And in the vine were three branches ...: and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes": Gen. 40:10. Elsewhere, the gleaning of grapes is also understood as the slaying of enemies: see B.V., Judges 8:2 and n. (a). Or again "... for the harvest is ripe": Rev. 14:15.

189. See Rev. 14:20

190. G.V., Rev. 14:20, n. (z).

191. G.V., Rev. 16:19. See also Rev. 14:10. We also find the following: "... the Lord powred out the drinke of his vengeance": G.V., Jer. 51:7, n. (d); "I give her cup into thine hand" to which the annotator has added the following comment: "I wil execute the same iudgements and vengeance against thee, and that with greater seueritie": G.V., Ezek. 23:31, n. (m).

192. B.V., Deut. 32:14. Also "He ... tooke of the drynke offeryng, and powred in of the wine": B.V., Ecclus. 50:15. Instead of "wine", the G.V. has "blood of the grape".

193. Psa. 75:8.

194. G.V., Psa. 75:8, n. (f). The effect of the cup is to utterly destroy the wicked.

in this scene was meant to be Christ who is also the Priest and sacrifice.[187] Ideas, in the Biblical texts, of winevats, wine, and grapes are transferred almost immediately to those of the wrath of God and of bloodshed[188] in such amounts that the blood reaches the bridles of the horses.[189] The Geneva Bible explains the expression "horse bridle" in these words: "By this similitude he declareth the horrible confusion of the tyrants and infideles, which delite in nothing but warres, slaughters, persecutions and effusion of blood".[190] Later in the same context, God hands out "the cup of the wine of the fiercenes of his wrath"[191] to the same city. Elsewhere in the Bible, expressions like "that thou mightest drinke the most pure blood of the grape"[192] are found. Finally, God exercising his judgment against Israel is described thus: "For in the hand of God there is a cup, and the wine is red: it is fully mixed, and he poureth out of the same",[193] to which verse the Geneva Version adds the following comment: "Gods wrath is compared to a cup of strong and delicate wine ...".[194] Thus,

---

187. See G.V., Rev. 14:18, n. (x).

188. Several passages in the Bible link the gathering of grapes with the destruction of people. In the dreams which the Pharaoh's baker and butler have while in prison, vine, clusters and grapes mean death: "And in the vine were three branches ...: and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes": Gen. 40:10. Elsewhere, the gleaning of grapes is also understood as the slaying of enemies: see B.V., Judges 8:2 and n. (a). Or again "... for the harvest is ripe": Rev. 14:15.

189. See Rev. 14:20

190. G.V., Rev. 14:20, n. (z).

191. G.V., Rev. 16:19. See also Rev. 14:10. We also find the following: "... the Lord powred out the drinke of his vengeance": G.V., Jer. 51:7, n. (d); "I give her cup into thine hand" to which the annotator has added the following comment: "I wil execute the same iudgements and vengeance against thee, and that with greater seueritie": G.V., Ezek. 23:31, n. (m).

192. B.V., Deut. 32:14. Also "He ... tooke of the drynke offeryng, and powred in of the wine": B.V., Ecclus. 50:15. Instead of "wine", the G.V. has "blood of the grape".

193. Psa. 75:8.

194. G.V., Psa. 75:8, n. (f). The effect of the cup is to utterly destroy the wicked.

"clusters", "wine", "blood", "wrath", all seem to bear an intimate relationship. Overtones of this relationship could be present in the play. The fall of clusters of monarchs is celebrated by cups or bowls of wine, symbols of the bloodshed, past and to come, brought about by the wrath of Tamburlaine. The cups of wine of the Last Supper are also symbols of blood to be shed as an effect of the wrath of God.[195] There is this major difference between Tamburlaine's banquet and the Last Supper: Tamburlaine does not offer "bowles of wine" to the God of whom he is the Scourge, but to an idol, the God of war, his rival whom he eventually supplants. The "bowles of wine" become the outward and visible sign of an inner reality of death and destruction. In other words, they are the sacrament instituting Tamburlaine's religion of warfare of which he is a distorted form of the Christ. Tamburlaine's banquet is a parody of the Last Supper. The fruits to be gained by the Last Supper were the spiritual benefits of life, abundance, and truth; the immediate fruits of Tamburlaine's religion are gold and crowns with death, barren destruction, and deceptive illusions of gain as a background. In case the glitter of the court and the crude taunts inflicted upon the victimized Bajazet in this scene should distract the audience from the issues at stake, Zenocrate's pleas on behalf of her father and her people serve the purpose of reminding the audience of Tamburlaine's irrevocable decision to destroy all for the sake of lucre and rule. Unlike Esther who prevails upon Ahasuerus on behalf of her own people and relatives,[196] Zenocrate must be a witness to the massacre of the Damascenes. The captive Turks on the scene and the impending fate of the Damascenes mutually enhance the implied sacrificial undertones connected with each.

The second course of the banquet is the distribution of the "cates" or delicacies served in the shape of crowns. If, for Tamburlaine's captains,

---

195. The "cup" is a symbol of "the angre of God for mans sinnes": See G.V., Matt. 26:39, n. (o).

196. See Esther 7.

the drinking of the bowls of wine in honour of the God of war implied an unconditional commitment to deeds of war and bloodshed at the discretion of Tamburlaine's will, the "cates" focus the attention on the nature of the rewards to be expected at the cost of so much. They symbolize the ideals which shall inspire the course of action of Tamburlaine and his men. This part of the banquet also carries its share of Biblical overtones. To his three followers, Tamburlaine immediately says: "Here are the cates you desire to finger, are they not?" (1T. 4.4.107-108). One may suspect the effect that the sight of these crowns has on Tamburlaine's guests. The past dreams of conquering crowns and the aspirations to rule entertained by Tamburlaine's men surge again in their full force. However, are Theridamas and Techelles reminding Tamburlaine that they have yet to receive their rewards of crowns before they can fully share this second course with him? For "none save kinges must feede with these" (1T. 4.4.109-110). Tamburlaine supposedly sets one crown aside for each, the Soldan, the King of Arabia, and the Governor of Damascus,[197] for he has already promised Zenocrate that her father's "person shall be safe, / And all the friendes of faire Zenocrate" (1T. 4.4.87-88). He then distributes the three crowns of Argier, Fesse, and Morocus. Theridamas, Techelles, and Usumcasane receive their anticipated rewards. They can now fully share the second course with their leader.

Several Biblical texts caution against the participation of such delicacies. The Bible and its annotators warn the reader: "When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee".[198] "Be not desirous of his deintie meats: for it is a deceiuable meat".[199] "For oft times the riche, when they bid their inferiours to their tables, it is not for the love they beare them, but for their owne secret purposes".[200] One prayer of the Psalmist runs as

197. See 1T. 4.4.113-114.

198. Prov. 23:1.

199. Prov. 23:3.

200. G.V., Prov. 23:3, n. (o). See also Prov. 23:6, 7.

follows: "Incline not mine heart to euil, that I shulde commit wicked workes with men that worke iniquitie: and let me not eat of their delicates",[201] to which the Geneva Bible adds the following explanatory note: "Let not their prosperitie allure me to be wicked as thei are".[202] Sharing the same delicacies supposes communion of thoughts and aspirations.[203] The Elizabethans were most probably aware of the full significance of the action of Tamburlaine's men. These fail to grasp the nature of Tamburlaine's rewards, that Tamburlaine is accepting them as his banquet guests primarily for the use he plans to make of them to further his own cause. Although Tamburlaine professes a genuine and lasting friendship for these three, nevertheless, the scene does carry notions of the exaggerated and misplaced importance given to wordly honours, titles, and riches which the cates symbolize. By eating these delicates, Tamburlaine's men are fully admitted into Tamburlaine's system of action and are fully committed to the ethics which govern this system. They will be expected to assume fully their share of the wickedness and cruelty as part of Tamburlaine's warfare, the religion of which they have become members. Tamburlaine's colleagues no more will hesitate to inflict brutal treatment upon Tamburlaine's victims as the fate of the Virgins of Damascus proves. By partaking of the "bowles of wine" and the "cates", Tamburlaine's followers have destroyed their own individual identity and ideals and have formally become one with their leader. This ceremonial rite symbolizes a covenant pledged between the God of war, Tamburlaine, and his followers, a sacred pledge by which they are now committed to the ideals of this new ethics of war, cruelty, hatred and destruction. Warfare, symbolized by the "bowles of wine" and earthly rewards as "cates", sums up Tamburlaine's deeds as a king-god.

---

201. G.V., Psa. 141:4.

202. G.V., Psa. 141:4, n. (d). See also G.V., Dan. 1:12, n. (p).

203. Eating together was a sign of special friendship: "Thei did eat together as familiar friends": G.V., Jer. 41:1, n. (c).

Tamburlaine closes the banquet scene with his instructions to his men. Tamburlaine's captains, newly crowned, are now ready to receive their set of standards by which they are to function in Tamburlaine's system. Valour and magnanimity displayed in deeds of military prowess is the sole virtue, or virtù, which is to bring them the coveted honours (1T. 4.4.126 ff.). Theridamas's promise to outdo his past deeds is the condition by which he may preserve the honours hitherto received (1T. 4.4.130-133). There is no other prospect open to them but to excell in an evermore intensive warfare with its expanding wastes of desolation. Tamburlaine's words draw from his men a renewed sense of dedication to Tamburlaine's initiatives which are now invested with a sacred character. The last glimpse into this new order points to only two possible choices for Tamburlaine's men, either to conquer or to be a conquered slave. Tamburlaine and his followers will make sure they do not fall into the second category.

As has been mentioned before, Elizabethans probably grasped the full significance of Tamburlaine's banquet as a counterpart of Christ's Last Supper. The sharing of wine and bread was too evocative of Christ's farewell gesture to his Apostles to be missed by Marlowe's contemporaries. Christ had been recognized as the priest-king in this Biblical rite. He had officiated as the High-Priest of God. His main function in the last scene as set against the ordeal of Good Friday, had been to usher in the new covenant as a substitute for the old order. As a matter of fact, the Last Supper derived its full meaning from the cruel death of Christ, an innocent victim sacrificed to appease the wrath of his Father. With the death of this victim, dawned a new era dominated by the triumphant figure of Christ, the king and High-Priest of this era, the full expression of God in his human form. The two events together inaugurated a religion based on love and peace in which self-sacrifice replaced the offering of animals in the Old Testament.

Several of these aspects seem to be parodied in Tamburlaine's banquet scene. Tamburlaine is the intermediary agent between the God of war and his men.

His role is almost the equivalent of that of a mediatorial High-Priest. If Marlowe was truly trying to model Tamburlaine on Mahomet's contemporary image, as has already been insinuated, then Tamburlaine, like his model, could also have been playing the role of an intermediary High-Priest.[204] Tamburlaine's banquet is a point of transition in the play, as the episode of the death of the Virgins of Damascus, the first significant event after the martial banquet, illustrates. The scene gravitates around the new figure of Tamburlaine, as he appears in the court, and the sacrificial function of the Virgins of Damascus, both focal points creating an atmosphere of awe and dread. The first striking note of this scene is that the role of Tamburlaine has evolved considerably. On this third day of the siege, Tamburlaine's coal-black tents are messengers of the death and cruelty awaiting the Damascenes. The Governor of Damascus already recognizes Tamburlaine for what he is, "a god of war" (1T. 5.1.1) spreading terror everywhere. From a sort of Mahomet in deed if not in name, Tamburlaine has become an emperor-deity. The pleas which the Virgins make to him literally take the form of a prayer. Tamburlaine is the "sacred emperor" (1T. 5.1.74) who is begged to have pity on "the prostrate service" (1T. 5.1.100) of Damascus. As has been mentioned before, "prostrate service" evokes the grovelling scenes in the courts of Roman and Eastern potentates of antiquity. But Tamburlaine is more of a deity than the above would suppose. It is possible that the use of the word "image" (1T. 5.1.75) to address him may evoke the Biblical sense most frequently attached to this word by the Elizabethans. The word was then synonymous with idol. In this sense, Tamburlaine is a godly personification of the ideals of his religion of warfare. For these ideals of "Honor and Nobilitie" (1T. 5.1.75) are a faithful echo of those of "valure", "magnanimity", "vertue" (1T. 4.4 126 ff.) as a source of honour explained by Tamburlaine in the previous scene.

---

204. See above, pp.272-273. Tamburlaine is referred to in lines alluding to the High-Priest during Christ's trial. Cf. "Answerest thou the High-Priest so?": John 18:22 with "Villain, knowest thou to whom thou speakest?": 1T. 4.4.39.

But more yet is inferred. The Virgin addresses Tamburlaine in terms which bear a striking resemblance to those which Paul uses to describe the nature of Christ. A passage, which a modern Authorized Version has entitled "The seven superiorities of Christ",[205] presents Christ as "the image of the invisible God", "the first-born of all creation", for by him and for him were all things created, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or powers. He is the head of the church, of all things and the fullness dwells in Him.[206] In the words of the first Virgin of Damascus, who acts as the speaker for the group, Marlowe's Tamburlaine is also the

> Most happy King and Emperour of the earth,
> Image of Honor and Nobilitie,
> For whome the Powers divine have made the world,
> And on whose throne the holy Graces sit.
> (1T. 5.1.74-79)

In the light of Paul's text the word"image" in connection with Tamburlaine acquires new meanings. Tamburlaine becomes the image of the invisible God of war, a kind of God of war made man as the Governor of Damascus has already recognized him to be, an earthly representation of this warring divinity. The expressions used to address this God of war, strangely enough, evoke those used by Paul to describe Christ. The pre-eminence of Christ, the fact that all things were created for him, that in him all fullness dwells, all of these find their corresponding equivalents in Marlowe's text. Tamburlaine is equally the pre-eminent ruler of the earth, "for whome the Powers divine have made the world",

---

205. See Scofield, ed. cit., n. 29, p. 1285.

206. Christ is presented as one "who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers - all things were created by him, and for him; And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the Church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell: Col. 1:15-19.

in "whose sweete person is compriz'd the Sum / Of natures Skill and heavenly majestie" (1T. 5.1.78-79), a combination of a perfect human invested with divine attributes. Furthermore, the words "Powers", "thrones", are faithful echoes of the Pauline text. Finally, by analogy, Tamburlaine may be considered as the head of a new religion in the same way that Christ is the head of his renewed Church and that Mahomet was the founder of his faith.[207] Because Marlowe seems to have paganized the Pauline Passage, the image of Tamburlaine which emerges resembles the description of Christ strongly enough to make of Tamburlaine a counterpart of the figure of Christ;[208] by the same token it resembles that of the posthumous idealized Mahomet. Christ was the king and High-Priest of God; so Marlowe may have intended Tamburlaine to be his counterpart. As Christ combined the divine and human natures in his person, so do "the Sum/Of natures skill" merge with the "heavenly majestie" present in Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine's role as a godly high-priest is confirmed as he presides over the sacrifice of the Virgins of Damascus.[209] Tamburlaine is a god of war whose wrath must be appeased and satisfied by sacrificial victims.

For the theme of sacrifice is again prominent in this scene. Tamburlaine addresses the Virgins as "turtles". No Elizabethan, however slightly familiar with the Biblical text, would have missed this allusion. This shortened form for "turtle doves" would have evoked the sacrificial rite of the Old Testament wherein turtle doves were sometimes offered as victims in the place of larger animals.[210] Besides Marlowe has couched the word within this context: "What, are

---

207. See above, p. 155 and n. 76; pp. 329-330.

208. Whereas Tamburlaine has shared, in reality, a bread of death with his men, Christ was to be the "bread of life": see John 6:48.

209. There is in the Bible the following verse which could be applied to Damascus: "I wyl lay siege vnto Ariel, so that there shalbe heauinesse and sorowe in it: and it shalbe vnto me euen an aulter of slaughter": B.V., Isa. 29:2. The G.V. comments the verse as follows: "Your citie shalbe ful of blood, as an altar whereon they sacrifice": G.V., Isa. 29:2, n. (c). In view of the sacrificial overtones of this section of the play, Damascus could well be the altar of sacrifice for and in homage to Tamburlaine as priest and god.

the Turtles fraide out of their neastes?" (1T. 5.1.64), an expression which occurs in the Bible[211] and which would have enhanced the Biblical overtones attached to this scene. Once more Marlowe's line suggests a transfer from the sacrificing of animals to the self-sacrifice of humans as promoted in the New Testament. The sacrificial innocent dove is absorbed and substituted by the human dimensions of the Virgins offering themselves and their innocence as a ransom for their city. The two forms of sacrifice are brought together in the victims in the same way that Christ is often identified with the sacrificed lamb of the Passover rite.[212] The suggested transition from animal victims to the new form is similar to the one brought about by Christ in the change of ritual sacrifice from those of the Old Testament to those of the New.

By the death of the Virgins of Damascus and the cruelty with which the deed is performed, the new religion of hatred and warfare is formally established. Tamburlaine expresses feelings of "furie and incensed hate" (1T. 5.1.71) for the first time in the play, with respect to Damascus. Tamburlaine has begun the degeneration which will pursue its course right through the play to the end of his career. While he now expects the God of war to fill their "helmets full of golde" (1T. 4.4.7) as a reward, the day will come when the roles will be reversed. The goddess of vengeance, at least in the imagination of Theridamas, will be the one to offer Tamburlaine "a helmet ful of blood" (2T. 3.4.57) as a tribute

---

210. See Gen. 15:9; Lev. 1:14; 5:7,11; 12:6,8; 14:22,30; 15:14,29: Num. 6:10; Luke 2:24. The psalmist pleads as follows: "O deliuer not the soule of thy turtle doue vnto a wylde beast": B.V., Psa. 74:19, T.H. "Beast" is paraphrased as "the multitude of the enimies": Psa. 74:19, C.P.T. "Turtle dove" is explained as "the Church of God, which is exposed as a pray to the wicked": G.V., Psa. 74:19, n. (n). One can readily see that the term "turtle dove" was rich with various Biblical connotations.

211. Cf. with the following: "For as for the daughters of Moab, they shalbe as a tremblyng birde that is put out of her neste": B.V., Isa. 16:2.

212. " ... Jesus Christ, of whome this lambe [of the Passover] was a figure": G.V., Deut. 16:6, n. (e).

to a God of war's military prowess now become greater than Mahomet's. In this process, Tamburlaine draws his colleagues along with him. They become active participants and collaborators in his deeds of slaughter and ruin. The new creed of death by the sword in the service of the military and destructive roles of "virtue" or virtù, is well established and will continue to make its effects felt throughout the rest of the career of Tamburlaine. In order that this section of the play may have the full significance that the dramatist intends it to have, Marlowe could choose no better way than to construct it according to the pattern of an inverse counterpart of the Lord's Supper. By resorting to this means, Marlowe raises his hero to the level of a sacred character and invests his activities with religious connotations which add meaning to the career of a simple, however great, warrior. Even in a context of pagan idolatry, Marlowe manages to create a religious aura which the timely intervention of the hero in European affairs had attached to the name of Tamerlane. By Christian standards, the intervention had amounted to the crushing of the Islamic force by the deeds of a pagan warrior. Various elements, therefore, that is Moslem, pagan, and Christian, had to be incorporated into the scene if the entity and spirit of Tamburlaine were to be recaptured and convey the specific significance the hero had for Christians of the sixteenth century.

Thus Tamberlaine's religion of war has been analysed. There are many aspects about it which indicate that Marlowe may have used the traits of Mahomet's religion of war as Greville describes it, to structure that of his hero. Similarities are numerous enough to suggest a parallel between Tamburlaine and Mahomet. The doctrine, the teaching, the discipline of Mahomet's creed seem to be the basic tenets upon which the dramatist structures Tamburlaine's religion of war. According to Greville, Mahomet and his warriors functioned by the dictates of a specific set of norms and standards. To a striking degree, these norms and standards seem to be those by which Tamburlaine and his men operate. As peace and all the virtues associated with it were banned from Mahomet's code of war,

so are they banished from the world of war presided over by Tamburlaine. Indeed, warfare is elevated to such a degree of perfection in the mind of Marlowe's hero that it somewhat develops into a kind of essence devoid of any deterring elements, an essence whose purity has something godly in it. This essence of warfare in the hero seems to promote Tamburlaine to a form of deity like a renewed or revived god of war or an idol. Thus like Mahomet, Tamburlaine gradually makes a god of himself. Indeed, Marlowe seems to have modelled Tamburlaine and his creed on Mahomet and his religion of war.

It is true that Marlowe avoids associating with his hero any traits which would characterize him as a Moslem. Tamburlaine as a Moslem would have lost much of the spell he exercised on his audience. Nevertheless, the problems of building up a great stage character with a scarcity of historical details to support his characterization may have led Marlowe to work on the idea of presenting Tamburlaine as a new and modernized image of Mahomet. Any association of Tamburlaine with Mahomet inevitably spelt greatness for Marlowe's hero. Mahomet unquestionably ranged among the great characters of history. Possibly Marlowe was trying to create in his Tamburlaine a counter-image of Mahomet. Tamburlaine, originally from the regions of Islam, had fought against Islam and for the Christians, the reverse to what Mahomet and his followers had done. As a result, subsequent generations of admiring Christians had refashioned the image of the historical warrior into traits or features more compatible with their own concepts of a Christian hero. Marlowe seems to have preserved in Tamburlaine traits related to this pagan hero striking a deadly blow to the advantage of the Christians. Marlowe's hero is a pagan who becomes an idol dedicated to war against Islam right through the play. However, the scene of the banquet and that of the massacre of Damascus, as well as other scenes in the play, seem to carry a sufficient number of Christian connotations to make the hero particularly meaningful to a Christian Elizabethan audience. Tamburlaine, while remaining a pagan, could appeal to a Christian audience.

This chapter has examined the essence of Tamburlaine the idol and the

effects which the projection of this idol in action had on the environment in which he was functioning. The idol and his action sum up the religion of Tamburlaine. However, to have explained the deified entity of Tamburlaine is not necessarily to have said all there is to say about the role of Tamburlaine in the play. While Tamburlaine is pursuing his personal ambitions of power, rule, and immortality, he is at the same time fulfilling a purpose external to himself. The study of the entity of Tamburlaine, therefore, must be supplemented by an examination of his role within the context of his career. This role is, in some respects, assigned to him by an authority outside of himself. As Tamburlaine accomplishes his mission as a Scourge and Wrath of God, he is acting as a providential instrument. Tamburlaine's role as Scourge possesses a momentum and a coherence of its own, the understanding of which may offer additional insights into the Marlovian hero and the play as a whole. The following chapter, therefore, proposes to analyse the theme of Tamburlaine as the Scourge and Wrath of God.

Chapter 5

TAMBURLAINE, THE SCOURGE OF GOD

Part 1

The nature and degree of Tamburlaine's allegiance to the Islamic faith have been examined.[1] Nowhere in the play does he display any devotion, reverence, or worship for Mahomet, the founder of Islam. Neither does Tamburlaine show any concern about fulfilling the traditional precepts incumbent upon every faithful Moslem. Indeed, Tamburlaine's emotions with regards to Islam are deeply stirred only when its founder appears as a rival to his power and fame, or as an opponent who must be annihilated.[2] The conclusions to this examination are that the evidence to support the image of Tamburlaine as a Moslem is very slight indeed. While it is possible that Marlowe had the traits of an imamite Moslem leader in mind when he created his hero, nevertheless, the dramatist does not make these traits obvious in comparison to the Moslem elements he associates with the Turks. Marlowe seems rather to use the Islamic elements inasmuch as they generate antagonism between Tamburlaine and his enemies and justify his action against them. Even though Marlowe possibly meant Tamburlaine to be a Persian imam, the imamite traits of Tamburlaine do not necessarily explain all that the hero is and does in the play. The dramatic role of Tamburlaine is determined by values other than the Islamic ones.

The spiritual dimensions of the deified Tamburlaine have also been assessed.[3] While evidence shows that Tamburlaine gradually evolves into an idol as a new god of war, Tamburlaine's entity as a god or idol does not encompass the full spiritual dimensions of Marlowe's hero. Tamburlaine is

---

1. See above, pp. 228 ff.
2. See above, pp. 233 ff.
3. See above, pp. 370 ff.

made to surpass in power and efficiency all deities hitherto associated with the art of warfare, yet the theme of Tamburlaine, the idol, is not central to the drama. Tamburlaine's self-deification appears to develop collaterally with respect to the main action of the play, and for this reason, acquires a certain artificiality which is possibly enhanced by the mythological associations used to suggest this deification. While the presence of Tamburlaine the idol cannot be ignored, in several instances, Tamburlaine needs more than the excuse of his idolized entity to fully justify his behaviour. In fact, because, by Christian standards, this deification is objectionable in many respects, it undermines rather than exalts the greatness of the dramatic warrior. Clearly, there is more to Marlowe's hero than just to be a new god of war. The motives and the drives which determine Tabmurlaine's action spring from sources other than the Islamic ideology or the grandiose illusory dream of self-glorification. The key to Tamburlaine's entity and action lies elsewhere.

While the analysis of the Moslem elements,[4] of the theme of idolatry,[5] and of Tamburlaine's religion of war[6] seems to shed light on the inner meaning of the play, there is still the need to find the core around which the various religious aspects of the hero seem to integrate, the core which acts as a central element of coherence for the various episodes in the drama. One theme which is present in the play from the beginning to the end is that of Tamburlaine as the "Scourge of God". The importance of this theme obviously did not escape the attention of the editors of the first printed copy in 1590. Tamburlaine the Great is described as "a most puissant and mightye Monarque" who "for his tyranny, and terrour in Warre was tearmed, The Scourge of God".[7] In fact, Marlowe very soon introduces his hero in

---

4. See above, ch. 2, pp. 139-240.

5. See above, ch. 3, pp. 241-348

6. See above, ch. 3. pp. 349-444.

7. John D. Jump, ed., Tamburlaine the Great: Parts I and II (University of Nebraska, 1967), p. xxiv. The full title is as follows: "Tamburlaine the Great, Who, from a Scythian Shepheard, by his rare and woonderfull

cont'd./

such terms. Tamburlaine is mentioned the first time in the prologus as a warrior "scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword" (1T Pro. 6). When Tamburlaine breathes his last, he resignedly admits that "the Scourge of God must die" (2T 5.3.248) Between these two occurrences of the theme of Tamburlaine as Scourge of God, the idea recurs often enough[8] to remind the audience that the main purpose of Tamburlaine's existence and career is to act as the "Scourge and Wrath of God". The words appear sometimes as an explanation of what Tamburlaine is in truth and sometimes as a justification for the deeds he has performed. He openly recognizes himself as the Scourge and Wrath of God for the first time when he is about to destroy Bajazet's power (1T 3.3.44). The last occasion when he solemnly reaffirms his status as the Scourge of God occurs during the scene of the burning of the Koran (2T 5.1.184), when Tamburlaine is about to perform his major deed of scourging by destroying the heart and the source of inspiration of the Islamic faith. At other times, Tamburlaine presents to his sons the ideal of being the scourge and terror of the world as the only one worthy to pursue (2T 1.3.60, 62, 63). In fact, Tamburlaine's vocation as Scourge of God takes precedence over all his other prerogatives and achievements. He considers his role as scourge to be greater and more important than that of being "the Arch-Monark of the world" (2T 4.1.150). He explains: "I exercise a greater name, / The Scourge of God and terrour of the world" (2T 4.1.153-154). and, thereby, attempts to justify himself before his colleagues for having slain his own son. And so, the play is regularly punctuated by this word. Tamburlaine is either scourging the world or being scourged while the other characters contemplate the possibility of

---

Footnote No. 7 cont'd./

Conquests, became a most puissant and mightye Monarque. And (for his tyranny, terrour in Warre) was tearmed, The Scourge of God. Diuided into two Tragicall Discourses, as they were sundrie times shewed vpon Stages in the Citie of London. By the right honorable the Lord Admyrall. his seruantes... London... 1590": ibid.

8. Besides the two instances mentioned the word used in relation to Tamburlaine appears in the following: 1T 3.3.44; 4.2.32; 4.3.9; 2T 2.4.80; 3.5.21; 2T 4.1.154; 4.3.24, 99; 5.1.184. The word also occurs in 2T 1.3.60, 62, 63; 2.1.53; 3.1.38; 5.3.177. In all, the word appears over fifteen times.

scourging this "Scum of men, the hate and Scourge of God" (1T 4.3.9).

Queries inevitably come to mind. Just how important is this theme in the play? What dimensions did it add to the dramatic role of Marlowe's hero? What expectations might this theme have created in the audience about the mission, the behaviour, the destiny of Tamburlaine? What were the various concepts associated with the role of a "Scourge of God" in the mind of the Elizabethan? What new elements was Marlowe incorporating in his play when he chose to present Tamburlaine as a "Scourge of God"?

Modern scholars have noted the importance of the theme in the play. Leslie Spence is struck by the superabundant energy displayed by Marlowe's hero.[9] Yet according to her, either the extraordinarily ambitious and energetic Tamburlaine of the sources or the familiarity of the Elizabethan dramatist with the Senecan hero[10] would have been enough "to account for the energy of the divinely appointed Scourge of God"[11] as presented by the poet without the need to look to Machiavellian principles[12] which Marlowe might have used to create his hero. Might not the Elizabethan simply have expected such reserves of power and energy to emanate from a Scourge of God as that function was then understood? Roy W. Battenhouse, in his article on Tamburlaine as a Scourge of God,[13] sensed that critics had not attached sufficient importance to this theme in their interpretation of Marlowe's play. According to him, the expression "Scourge of God" is "a definitive concept which signifies a pattern of human behaviour and of divine destiny."[14]

---

9. See Leslie Spence, "Tamburlaine and Christopher Marlowe, PMLA 42(1927), p.616.
10. See ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. See ibid.
13. See Roy W. Battenhouse, "Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God", PMLA 56 (1941), pp. 337-348.
14. Ibid., p. 337.

The concept could determine to a large extent the nature, the purpose, and the final outcome of Tamburlaine's mission as a "Scourge of God".

By the time Marlowe wrote his play, the concept of the "Scourge of God" already had a long history. Theorists and moralists had used it throughout centuries to justify the deeds of tyrants, the calamities of war, and the catastrophes brought on by the elements in nature. Tyrants, wars, famines, and plagues were so alien to human aspirations of happiness that man had to find explanations beyond the scope of human understanding to account for their baffling and disturbing presence. On the other hand, humanity, keenly aware of its own inherent and persistent weaknesses easily read into those events the wrath of divine justice expressing its displeasure with the failings of mankind. God was using these agents of calamities to scourge the evil in man. In this perspective, histories became records of events by which divine Providence intervened in the course of human affairs for its own moral purposes. Wicked tyrants rose to chastise the less wicked until the day came when they themselves would receive their deserved punishment. Histories became accounts of scourges scourging and of scourges being scourged. The theory of the "Scourge of God" made histories "piously educational"[15] according to certain critics. Histories illustrated the ways and means by which divine retributive justice was exercised. Much could be learned about the ways of Providence from the study of historical characters and events.

Thomas Fortescue[16] and George Whetstones[17] reflect these preoccupations in their published works which were well known at the time of Marlowe and and which he probably used himself. Fortescue[18] offers a collection of

---

15. Ibid., p. 340.

16. Thomas Fortescue, The Foreste or Collection of Histories, no less profitable than pleasant and necessarie. ... (London, 1571)

17. George Whetstones, The English Myrror... (London, 1586).

18. Some details in Fortescue's book, apart from the story of Tamburlaine, point to Marlowe's use of this source. Fortescue tells the story of Phalaris and his bull of brass (See op. cit., n. 16, fol. 38v - 39,

cont'd./

histories "profitable", "pleasant and necessarie", illustrating in several instances the effects of the retributive justice of God. Whetstones analyses the disastrous effects of envy on states, princes, and religious creeds. Sir Walter Ralegh holds similar views about history. In his preface to the History of the World,[19] he describes the careers of several leaders and kings, from the time of the Normans down to the Tudor dynasty, who suffered the severe judgments of God in return for their crimes. Members of the French and Spanish dynasties were no exceptions to this rule. Finally, Peter Ashton points out in the dedication of his Turkish chronicles that history is profitable in that it moves men to imitate virtue, as illustrated, and to loathe vice.[20] Thus,

---

Footnote No. 18 cont'd./

43v.) which Marlowe refers to in the prologue of the Jew of Malta: see lines 24-26. Bound in the same volume, although possibly after Marlowe's death, is Syr Dauid Lindsey's A Dialogue betweene Experience and a Courtier ... (London, 1581). It tells of Pope Alexander treading on the emperor Frederick's back (see fol. 68-68v.). a fact which Marlowe uses in Doctor Faustus: see lines 915 ff. Marlowe even seems to quote from this Dialogue: cf.

Super aspidem et Basilicum ambulabis,
Et conculcabis Leonem et Draconem:

see fol. 68,

and And walke upon the dreadfull Adders backe,
Treading the Lyon, and the Dragon downe,
And fearelesse spurne the killing Basiliske:

see DF, lines 919-921. These lines are possibly inspired by the following verse of the Psalmist: "Thou shalt walke vpon the lion and the aspe: the yong lion and the dragon shalt thou tread vnder fete": G.V., Ps. 91:13. The B.V. uses "adder" instead of "aspe". Elsewhere, the Pope's flock is best recognized by their "shauen crownes": see Lindsey, ibid.. fol. 69. So are they in DF: see line 1007. This same dialogue pictures death in the following words:

That dreadfull dragon with his darts,
Is ready for to pearse the hartes
Of euery breathing wight aliue,
Agaynst whose strength may no man striue:

see Lindsey, ibid.. fol. 76 v. He compares death to a thief armed with darts: see ibid., fol. 135 v. Tamburlaine also sees "the uglie monster death" standing and aiming at him "with his murthering dart": see 2T 5.3.67, 69.

19. See William Oldys and Thomas Birch, eds., The Works of Sir Walter Ralegh, Kt.(Oxford, 1829), vol. 2, The History of the World, pp. iv - xxix.

20. See Peter Ashton, A shorte treatise vpon the Turkes Chronicles compyled by Paulus Iouius ... translated out of Latyn into englysh by Peter Ashton (London, 1546), in his dedicatory word.

in many respects, Renaissance historians perceived history as a record of God's work in human events and as a medium by which moral principles could be implemented.

If history was looked upon as a source of moral and educational guidance, one may easily understand why Renaissance theorists often explained tyrants as ministers of God's wrath. Battenhouse mentions Philip Mornay,[21] a Huguenot apologist, who "interpreted some of the greatest heroes of history as unwitting instruments of Divine Providence".[22] Mornay tells the story of Cyrus, Titus, and Attila. In each case, God used the ambitions and passions of these leaders to deliver the Israelites, to chastise the Jews for having rejected Christ, and to execute his justice upon the Western powers of Europe respectively.[23] Mornay is but one out of many[24] who treated the subject of leaders in history acting as scourges of God. No class in society, no profession was totally immune from the scourgings of God. George Gascoigne, in a long poem on the fruits of wars, warns princes, nobles, lawyers, and merchants against the effects of the wrath of God.[25] Long before the Renaissance moralists, pagan philosophers like Plutarch[26] and Plotinus[27] had propounded "the theory of the employment of scourges by

---

21. Mornay's De la Vérité de la Religion Chrétienne (Antwerp, 1581), licensed in the same year for translation by Sidney and Golding, was printed in 1586: see Battenhouse, op. cit., n. 13, p. 339 and n. 11.

22. Ibid., p. 339.

23. See ibid.

24. Battenhouse mentions several like Du Bartas: see ibid., p. 338, n. 5; p. 341, n. 18; La Primaudaye: see ibid., p. 342, n. 22; Calvin, see ibid., p. 338, notes 4, 7; etc.

25. See John W. Cunliffe, ed., The Complete Works of George Gascoigne (Cambridge, 1907), "Dulce Bellum Inexpertis", vol. 1, pp. 144 ff., stanzas 19, 20, 23.

26. Battenhouse mentions Plutarch (46? - 120?) as the first to indicate the theory of scourges of God: see op. cit., n. 13, p. 337 and n. 2.

27. Plotinus (205? - 270?) wrote that "bad men hold sway because of the feebleness, folly, and sloth of their victims; that Providence permits great wrong-doers to inflict punishment on the less wicked; that nevertheless the great wrong-doers receive ultimately an appropriate punishment": see ibid., pp. 337-338 and n. 3.

divine providence."[28] Indeed, this theme had a long academic and homiletic history.

Two factors possibly contributed to focus the attention of the Renaissance theorists more specifically on God as the scourger of humanity. The theme of a wrathful God ever ready to exercise his retributive justice was a convenient and powerful homiletic tool to use in the pulpit of the extreme Reformation movement. It aptly served the purpose of curbing the will of nonconforming dissidents into submission. It was thus particularly well suited to the zealous proselytism of the Calvinist,[29] the Huguenot, and other movements derived from these. To expound on the impending terrors of the wrath of God served a two-fold purpose. While it subdued the listener, it developed a feeling of self-righteousness among the promoters of this doctrine which was but the prelude to the conviction that they were indeed a people chosen by God whose purpose was to reform the world. Thus, Reformers, especially those of the Puritan faction, helped to keep alive the image of a displeased God ever ready to chastise all who rebelled against his laws, as they understood these to be.

The other factor which promoted the sway of these theories was the constant threat of the Turks and the quasi-total inability of the Christians to free themselves from the miseries which the presence of Islam brought in its wake. Christendom needed to explain this situation. Samuel C. Chew notes that the Turkish peril hung as an ominous cloud over Europe from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries.[30] He points out that Renaissance

---

28. Ibid., p. 337. Curtis B. Watson has this to say on the subject: "Indeed, it was sometimes assumed that even a wicked monarch was to be given unquestioned obedience since many Renaissance Protestants took it for granted that God could have selected an evil tyrant only if he wished to scourge a nation": Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor (Princeton, 1960), p. 84.

29. See ibid., p. 338.

30. See Samuel C., The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance. (New York, 1937), p. 101.

moralists viewed Islam as the scourge of a God who was justly offended by the sins of the Christians.[31] Indeed, fear and hatred of the Turks led some of these moralists to exalt the heroic qualities of their enemies. This attitude partly explains the enthusiastic interest in the character and career of Tamburlaine principally as the victor of the Turks.[32] Elsewhere, Chew mentions various comments made by writers of the Renaissance period. Edward Brerewood thought the cause of the defeat of the Christians lay in the justice of Almighty God punishing the sins of the Christians by spreading the victories of the Turks over large territories.[33] According to Thomas Dekker, the insolent triumphs of the Turks were examples of the terror of Jehovah's wrath.[34] Thomas Beard viewed the iconoclastic Turks as the instruments for the execution of God's most just wrath against the Byzantine emperors for having readmitted images into their churches.[35] Thus, the presence of the Turks generally meant the presence of God's scourges.

Marlowe's contemporaries had their own particular views about scourges. The dramatist could not have helped knowing about how the Turks fulfilled the special function of being scourges for the Christians. Peter Ashton, in the forewcrd to his Short Treatise upon the Turkes Chronicles. explains the purpose of history. History, he says, helps us "to amend our owen turkisshe and synfull lyues, seying that God of his infynite goodnes and loue towarde vs, sufferethe the wicked and cursed seed of Hismael to be a scourge to whip vs for our synnes and by this means to cal vs home agayne".[36]

---

31. See ibid., p. 106.

32. See ibid., pp. 106-107.

33. Quoted from Enquiries Touching the Diversity of Languages and Religions (1614), ch. xi, in Chew, op. cit., n. 30, p. 118.

34. See ibid., pp. 118-119 and n.

35. Quoted from The Theatre of God's Judgements. (ed. 1631), pp. 157 ff. in Chew, op. cit., n. 30, p. 119.

36. See op. cit., n. 20, Foreword. Also quoted in Battenhouse, op. cit., n. 13, pp. 338-339.

Thomas Newton deplores the imminence of the Turkish menace for

> they are euen at our doores and ready to come into our Houses, yf our penitent heartes doe not the sooner procure at the mercifull handes of God, an unytie, peace and concord among the Princes, Potentates, and People of that litle porcion of Chrystendome yet left.[37]

Newton finds that "diuision, discord and ciuile dissention"[38] are to be accounted as the cause of the Turkish threat. Whetstones writes that

> the puissant kingdome of the Turkes, at this day so much renouned and feared, ..., are of late yeeres sprung vp, as a scourge sent and suffered by God, for the sins and iniquities of the Christians.[39]

Their mission is to be "the terrour of the whole world".[40] Later Whetstones describes the attitude one should have in face of tyrants. As a father chastises his son,

> euen so God, which appointeth tirauntes to be the scourges of his ire, conceiued against wicked and vnthankfull people, if in patient suffering, they acknowledge his wrath to be iustlye imposed vpon their sinnes, he dealeth with the tirant as the good father doth with the rod. But if they spurne at his vengeaunce, and offer to reuenge the tiranny of their princes, he causeth tirauntes to rise like Hydraes heads, which shall torment them, ... in the bitternes of their affliction, they shalbe driuen to pray for their worst prince,[41]

as the Romans did for Nero.[42] Whetstones warns that "he that resisteth because the king is a tyrant encreaseth his sinnes, and doubleth Gods wrath, who sendeth Tyrants to punish the sinnes of the wicked".[43] Richard Knolles

---

37. Thomas Newton, A Notable Historie of the Saracens... (London, 1575), in his dedicatory word.

38. Ibid.

39. Op. cit., n. 17, p. 69.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., p. 114.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid., p. 202.

holds that the Turks are the Scourges of God. He explains as follows:

> The Almightye, ... in iustice deliuereth into the hands of these mercilesse miscreants, nation after nation, and kingdome vpon kingdome, as vnto the most terrible executioners of his dreadfull wrath, to be punished for their sinnes.[44]

Elsewhere, Knolles explains whence come the scourges:

> A greater power no doubt it was that stirred them vp, euen the hand of the Almightie, who being the author of all kingdomes vpon earth, as well those which he hath appointed asscourges wherewith to punish the world, as others more blessed; will haue his worke and purpose full of diuine majestie, to appeare in the stirring of them vp from right small beginnings, in the increasing and establishing of their greatnesse and power, to the astonishment of the world, and in the ruine and destruction of them againe the course of their appointed time once runne.[45]

Knolles appeals to the theories about scourges of God to explain the disasters which beset the Christians.[46] To sum up the above, one could say that God used tyrants to punish his people and that these tyrants were divinely-appointed scourges subject to being scourged when their role had been fulfilled. Because Marlowe is thought to have used these above authors as sources for his Tamburlaine,[47] one may assume that the dramatist had more than a casual acquaintance with these then current opinions about the designation and the role of the scourges of God, more particularly about the religious significance of the Turkish threat.

Battenhouse mentioned that Plutarch and Plotinus were the first to indicate the theory of the use of scourges by divine Providence.[48] He goes on to say, however, that the concept of the "Scourge of God" has a truer

---

44. Richard Knolles, The Generall Historie of the Turkes. ... (London, 1603), Indvction to the Christian Reader. Also quoted in Battenhouse, op. cit., n. 13, p. 339.

45. Ibid., p. 2.

46. See ibid., p. 124.

47. See above, pp. 86 ff.

48. See above, p. 451.

origin in the Old Testament,[49] more specifically in the prophecies of Isaiah[50] where Assyria is the rod of God's anger striking Israel because of their sins. He points out that Calvin elaborates on the theme of the Assyrians acting as God's vassals to correct his people until they in turn are purged and destroyed. Calvin, he says, applies Isaiah's doctrine to the interpretation of Renaissance history.[51] God is purging the Church of the diverse moral diseases which beset it at the time.[52] That the Old Testament be a truer source of the theory of God's use of scourges is plausible. That Marlowe may have become acquainted with the presence of this theory in Isaiah through the commentaries of Calvin is not impossible.[53] But it would seem unwise to single out this section of the Old Testament and Calvin's particular commentary of it as the only sources which provided the explanation of the theory on scourges at the time of the Renaissance. These theories were more widespread than this assumption would suggest. Moreover, there were, many other incidents in the Bible related to tyrants acting as Scourges of God which could have inspired the dramatist. Fortescue devotes a whole chapter of his translation of Peter Mexia's collection of histories to this thome.[54] The chapter is entitled as follows: "How for the most parte, cruell Kinges, and Blouddy tyrannes are the Ministers of God: and howe notwithstandinge they continually ende in state moste wretched, and extreame miserie".[55] Fortescue notes that such characters

---

49. See op. cit., n, 13, p. 338.

50. See Isa. 10:5-16.

51. Quoted from A Commentary upon the Prophecy of Isaiah (1609), pp. 115-122 in Battenhouse, op. cit., n. 13, p. 338 and n. 4.

52. See ibid.

53. Battenhouse notes that this commentary appeared in Latin in 1551, 1559, 1570, 1583; in French in 1552, 1572, the latter being the basis of C. Cotton's English translation entered to Harrison and Bishop in 1577, then to Kingston in 1608 and printed by him in 1609: see op. cit., n. 13., p. 338., n. 4.

54. See op. cit., n. 16, fol. 42v - 44.

55. Ibid., fol. 42v.

are recognized as "accursed Monsters"[56] and yet "the Scriptures in many places, ... termeth them by no woorse title, then the seruantes of God, for that by them, it hath pleased him to chastice the wicked".[57] So are idolaters called "the Ministers of God in the Scriptures".[58] Cyrus and Darius are cited. Their part is merged with that of the Medes and the Persians who were sanctified even though they were "onely executours of Gods iuste will, for the punishment of Babylon".[59] As much is said about Nabuchadnezzar who "executed his Iustice on the rebellious, and in this respect was called his Seruante".[60] Fortescue mentions Attila, king of the Goths and Scourge of God. In the same chapter, where the author has written about Nabuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and Darius, Fortescue introduces "the Greate Tamburlayne. that raygned not so many yeeres hence, a Capitayne no lesse blouddy then valiant, which also subdued so many Countries, and Prouinces",[61] who defined himself as "the yre of God".[62] Fortescue groups all of these historical characters who played a part in Biblical episodes along with Tamburlaine. In spite of the greatness of these heroes of history, Fortescue paints their moral portrait in no flattering terms for he concludes that

> all sutche cruell and incarnate Deuils, are instruments where with God chastiseth sinne, as also, with the same approueth, and trieth the iuste: and yet they notwithstandinge are not hence helde for iuste, ne [sic] shall they escape the heauy iudgement of God. For necessarie is it, that example of ill happen, but woe be vnto him, by whom it happeneth. Further in this life, God assuredly at sometime dothe punish them, besides that in an other worlde, Hell and damnation is certainely allotted them.[63]

---

56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid., fol. 43.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.

He goes on to say that "sutche Mercilesse, and Transubstantiate Monsters, haue died of somme violent, and ignominious deathe".[64] Men like Phalaris, Silla, Marius, Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero finally "gaue foorthe [their] Spirite to the whole Senate of Divels".[65]

Thus even before Marlowe undertook the task of writing his play, his hero was already associated in his mind with Biblical and historical tyrants, several of whom played important parts in Biblical episodes. Tamburlaine could be likened to one or the other of those tyrants or idolaters in the Bible, who had acted as ministers of God. The dramatist was familiar, through the sources he probably used, with the idea that the servants of God are not all necessarily just and holy men, that God could choose obscure and humble servants, sometimes wicked as well, to fulfil his purposes and accomplish great deeds in doing so. He also knew that being God's servants did not necessarily whitewash their guilt nor redeem them as reprobates. The fate merited by their deeds awaited them sooner or later. From reading accounts like those referred to above, Marlowe could also sense that the theme of the "Scourge of God" was first and foremost a Biblical one, that Scripture was the source which provided the most accurate picture of the career and mission of a scourge. Is there any evidence in the play which might suggest that this is so?

It must be remembered that Marlowe did not invent the figure of Tamburlaine as the "Scourge and Wrath of God", or "the Terror of the world". As was pointed out before, Tamburlaine appeared as such in many accounts of the chroniclers. One could even wonder if the Timur of history did not emerge at some time as a "Scourge of God" as a result of some Christian influences bearing on the facts of Timur's life. Tamburlaine's mission as a scourge reflected the impact that his intervention had had on his contemporaries in Europe. These had been at a loss in their attempts to explain

---

64. Ibid., fol. 43 - 43v.

65. Ibid., fol. 43v.

the presence of Timur. So great and beneficial effects of his intervention had to be instigated by a divine power and driven by godly motives. The role of a Biblical Scourge of God supplied the needed explanations. Christians possibly could find no more effective means of epitomizing the place of Tamburlaine in their own history of encounters with the Turks. To them, his appearance on the scene could not be explained by other than divine interventions. His warfare had scourged their own persistent enemy, the Turks. Rumours of Tamerlane's cruelty could not annul the fact that he had destroyed an enemy of the Western Church, an invincible one at that. He had saved the people of God in spite of his wicked deeds. All of these facets were implied and included in the phrase "Tamburlaine , the Scourge and Wrath of God". By crediting Tamburlaine with such a role, associations of the Scythian with the Christian concepts of a warrior of God were intimated. These concepts had their roots in the stories of the Biblical heroes. Thus the idea of a "Scourge of God" could not be easily divorced from the names of the Biblical characters who had played similar roles in the history of Israel.

Indeed, Biblical connotations perhaps were largely responsible for the transformations that the story of Timur's campaigns had undergone under the pen of successive Christian chroniclers. The image and mission of Tamburlaine as a "Scourge of God" had left its stamp on his pattern of destruction. Was it by mere coincidence that Marlowe's emphasis on the places and countries conquered by Tamburlaine should coincide with those upon which the Biblical Scourges of God had exercised their tyranny and destruction? Many are the Scriptural passages which are concerned with the destruction of Damascus, of Babylon and Jerusalem, and with the defeat of Egypt. Marlowe chose to preserve this image and role of Tamburlaine as the "Scourge of God" and to revolve the action of his play around the destruction of Damascus and the defeat of Egypt. He chose to emphasize the theme of the destruction of Babylon by singling out this city as the last

on Tamburlaine's list of campaigns, as the place of his death instead of Samarqand as the chroniclers related[66] or during the course of a campaign to China as Timur's historians reported.[67] Could the destruction of Jerusalem have been symbolized by the dramatic character of that name, a king of the Hebrews[68] fighting for the Turkish Orcanes, who was eventually defeated and harnessed to Tamburlaine's chariot?[69] Did Marlowe's rendition of Tamburlaine's role as a "Scourge of God" imply additional elements borrowed from the Bible? If so what were they and how did the dramatist use them? What did they contribute towards the characterization of Marlowe's hero?

Tamburlaine claims his role in the world is to be the "Scourge of God". The understanding of the theme of the Scourge of God among Marlowe's contemporaries has been briefly examined. However, in order to define and assess the precise nature and importance of Tamburlaine's role as such in the play, and in order to arrive at an exact understanding of Tamburlaine's relationship with this God, there might be some value in attempting to clarify the nature and character of the God to whose service Tamburlaine is committed as opposed to the presence of the other deities in the play. The galaxy of gods and divinities which hover over the characters in this drama dispels any clear notions one may have about this God whose scourge Tamburlaine claims to be and creates confusion about Tamburlaine's religious allegiances. The ambiguous use of the word "Jove", often interchangeable with the word "God", does not help to clarify this problem. Consequently, an attempt must be made to enlighten this confusion and to resolve this ambiguity.

---

66. See above, pp. 122-123.

67. See above, p 64, n. 131; p. 79 and n. 215.

68. See 2T 3.5.32-33; also 2T 5.1.s.d. following line 62.

69. See 2T 5.1.129 ff. when the kings of Trebizon and Soria are replaced by Orcanes, the king of Natolia, and the King of Jerusalem.

Obviously, the God who chooses scourges is not the kind of god Zabina is longing for to replace Mahomet, too weak and helpless to save Bajazet and herself (1T 5.1.239). Nor is he the kind of god Tamburlaine believed Mahomet to be (2T 5.1.175) before he managed to defeat the Turks in spite of the strength of Mahomet's religion. Neither is he the god whose prerogatives and privileges are weighed against the advantages of being a king by Tamburlaine and his colleagues (1T 2.5.56 ff.). Neither is he the "angrie God of armes" (1T 2.7.58)[70] whom Tamburlaine is emulating, whom he eventually presumes he has made his slave by his long series of victories (2T 3.4.53). Neither is this God, who guides scourges, to be identified with the ones menaced and dared by the presence of Tamburlaine (1T 1.2.257)[71] whose tempests he manages to curb (1T 5.1.184), who are countermanded by Tamburlaine's fortune (1T 5.1.233), and whom Tamburlaine hopes to challenge on the battlefield (2T 5.3.50, 52). Neither does Marlowe's text lead one to understand that the God of Scourges is one of the many gods whose immortality Tamburlaine would like to share (1T 1.2.201), or one of those who could be witnesses to his pledges (1T 1.2.234) or who would hold parliaments to sanction or disavow measures taken by men (1T 2.7.66); neither is he a God who would be associated with Hermes (1T 1.2.210) or Apollo (1T 1.2.212), who would heighten the pomp and ceremony displayed in the court of Jove (2T 4.3.129). The deities, in all these instances are of another order, a set of minor gods in whose ranks Tamburlaine, recognized as a god of war by the Governor of Damascus (1T 5.1.1), acclaimed by himself (2T 3.5.22), and accepted and served as an earthly god by Techelles (1T 1.3.138), could, as in the case of Alexander,[72] hope to figure honourably. Most of these gods represent ideals for Tamburlaine

---

70. See also 1T 5.1.125. This same god is referred to as the god of war in 1T 4.4.6 and 5.1.450.

71. See also 1T 2.3.21; 2.6.39; 2T 4.1.79.

72. See above, pp. 354-355.

to pursue or rivals challenging him to surpass them and himself. This host of minor gods would indeed be quite compatible with Tamburlaine's aspirations and be in keeping with the cult of numerous gods observed in the regions from which Tamburlaine was supposed to hail.[73] Furthermore, these allusions to the deities of the Greek and Roman mythology were appealing to the Elizabethan interested in the ancient classics, a corollary to the revival of learning which the Renaissance had brought about. From the literary point of view, these allusions fired the imaginations of poets and readers into the boundless world of make-believe where possibilities were infinite. Consort with the gods, deeds worthy of the greatest epics, deification of men and incarnation of deities were part and parcel of this dream-world. In this context, the deified Tamburlaine could quite justifiably experience a certain affinity with these humanized divinities which, like him, were moved by ambitions, passions, rivalries, and lofty aspirations akin to his own.

There is, however, a God in Tamburlaine of quite another mettle. He is a God on whom seem to converge the worship and reverence of various groups in the play, who transcends the limitations of the humanized mythological deities. This God, whom the Christian Sigismund jealously and possessively proclaims as "our God" (2T 2.1.63) is a vengeful, wrathful divinity. By him, Sigismund and Frederick feel they are placed under the obligation of scourging the pagan Turks, and of avenging the death of numerous Christians killed by these Turks (2T 2.1.51-52). Frederick's motives for scourging the Turks are strikingly similar to the ones Tamburlaine claimed he had as a Scourge of God for defeating Bajazet mainly to intervene on behalf of the oppressed Christians (1T 3.3.44-50) and to strike at the Turks who had made "quick havock of the Christian blood" (1T 3.3.58). He is the

---

73. The Arabians and the peoples of Asia Minor were noted for their hosts of minor gods. This religious characteristic was at the root of Mahomet's militancy against the presence of idolatry in those countries. See above pp. 147-148.

Biblical God of Balaam (2T 2.1.54) known for his vengeance and for the jealous anger of his fearful arm (2T 2.1.57) pouring rigorous punishment on the heads of sinners (2T 2.1.58) as the dying Sigismund is forced to admit after his defeat (2T 2.3.2-4). There is one line, however, which redeems the awesome justice of this Christian God. Sigismund breathes forth his last in a vision of "a second life in endlesse mercie" (2T 2.3.9), as a reward for his repentant dispositions (2T 2.3.1-9).[74]

This God is not the exclusive property of the Christians. The Turks, in the words of Orcanes, believe in such a God, for Orcanes's God is also akin to the Biblical God in whose image "the fleshly heart of man" is made (2T 2.2.37-38).[75] Orcanes's God "sits on high and never sleeps"

---

74. Sigismund's lines sum up the orthodox Christian teaching on the themes of sin, affliction, and repentance. Sigismund is brought to a recognition of his sins and to feelings of repentance through affliction. So had Joseph's brothers been brought to the awareness of their evil behaviour by affliction: see G.V., Gen. 42:21, n. (f) and B.V., Gen. 42:21, n (l). Indeed, awareness of one's sin led to the understanding of the purpose of afflictions for "he that hath conscience of sinne, seeth that affliction commeth from God": B.V., Gen. 42:28, n. (p). "The end of afflictions is, to humble ourselues with true repentance vnder the hand of God": G.V., Exod. 10:3, n. (b). David knew "that his afflictions were Gods messingers to call him to repentance for his sinnes, thogh toward his enemies he was innocent, and that in Gods sight all men are sinners": G.V., Psa. 143:2, n. (c). As a matter of fact, by the attitude of the afflicted towards his sorrows the good could be distinguished from the wicked. For "affliction woorketh not lyke effect in the wycked and in the godly: In the one grudge, and desperation, in the other repentance and reconciliation": see B.V., 1 Sam. 5:11, n. (d). See also G.V., 1 Sam. 5:11, n. (e). Christian doctrine taught that repentance was the way to salvation: see B.V. 2 Sam. 12:13, n. (f); G.V., 2 Sam. 12:13, n. (g); G.V., Job 36:9, n. (f); G.V., Ps. 80:7 n. (f); Isa. 57:15; G.V., Hos. 14:4, n. (e); G.V. Joel 1:13, n. (h); G.V., Zech, 13:1, n. (a); Ecclus. 2:12. Sigismund's perception of God as a "just and dreadfull punisher of sinne" (2T 2.3.4) echoes similar images of and comments about the God of the Bible. Even "the idolaters confesse there is a true God, who punisheth sinne iustely": G.V., 1 Sam. 6:3, n. (b). See also G.V., Ps. 59:5, n.(d) and Jer. 14:10. Like Daniel, Sigismund recognizes that "whensoeuer God punisheth, he doeth it for iuste cause: and thus the godlie neuer accuse him of rigour as the wicked do, but acknowledge that in themselues there is iuste cause, why he shulde so intreat them": G.V., Dan. 9:7, n. (f). See also Judith 7:17.

75. This image of "the fleshly heart of man" as opposed to a "stony heart" is Biblical. God promises to give man "a fleshly heart": see B.V. Ezek. 11:19. See also B.V., Ezek. 36:26; Ecclus. 17:14; 2 Cor. 3:3.

(2T 2.2.49)[76], is infinite and "every where fils every Continent,[77]/ With strange infusion of his sacred vigor" (2T 2.2.51-52). This God, who possesses "endlesse power and puritie" (2T 2.2.53), strikes vengeance against Sigismund for his breach of promise with the Turks (2T 2.2.54). This Biblical God is the God of Islam as well, the God with whom Mahomet is associated[78] as "the friend of God" (2T 1.1.137), by whom Mahomet sits (2T 5.1.193),[79] by whom Mahomet is the intermediary on behalf of men (1T 3.3.195). Thus the God of the Christians, exception being made for the divine sonship of Christ, is very similar to the God of the Turks.

Not much is said in specific terms about the God of Tamburlaine of whom he is the Scourge except that Tamburlaine proclaims he is the Scourge of "a God full of revenging wrath" (2T 5.1.182)[80] and solemnly declares that him alone he will obey (2T 5.1.184). Indeed, this God is the only deity which may elicit from Tamburlaine a sense of submission and reverence, a disposition of openness towards any divine guidance, "For he is God alone, and none but he" (2T 5.1.201). It is true that a certain predetermined pattern of action may be expected in Tamburlaine's submission and allegiance to a God of wrath; Tamburlaine may easily read his own ambitious plans of war and power in the dictates of this God. This is one infallible way of making Tamburlaine's deeds of war sacred in his own eyes as a dramatic hero, in the minds of his Elizabethan audience, as well as in that of the successive Christian chroniclers of Tamerlane's story.

---

76. The God of the Bible also sits on high on a throne or heavenly seat in or above the heavens: see B.V., Deut. 33:26; 1 Kgs. 22:19; 2 Chr. 18:18; B.V. Isa. 66:1; Matt. 5:34; 23:22; Acts 7:49.

77. Orcanes's God is uncircumscriptible. So is the Biblical God. "Iah and Iehovah are the names of God which do signifie his essence and maiestie incomprehensible": G.V., Ps. 68:4, n (c). God fills heaven and earth: see G.V. Isa 66: 1, n. (a); Jer. 23:24. He "can not be conteined in any space of [sic] place": G.V., Acts 7:49, n. (z).

78. See 1T 5.1.479; 2T 5.2.11, 37.

79. Christ is described as a high-priest sitting on the right hand of God: see B.V., G.V., Heb. 8:1. See also B.V., G.V., Heb. 12:2; Matt. 22:44.

80. For more details about the revenging wrathful God of Scourges, see below, pp. 506 ff.

One point is clear however. Tamburlaine's concepts about the divinity governing his destiny were equally those of the Christians and of the Turks. The God of Tamburlaine was the God of the Christians as well as of the Moslems. In each case, the dramatic characters are dealing with a vengeful and wrathful divinity.[81] This God, who governs the fate of the Christians and of the Turks, grants victory to the latter, to pagans at the expense of the Christians, and these in turn are defeated by Tamburlaine who obeys this same God of wrath. Divine justice strikes against the Christians and the Turks in favour of and through Tamburlaine, its Scourge. The wrath and the awesome justice exercised on behalf of Tamburlaine dispels all recollections of the power and vengeance of the God of Sigismund and Orcanes. This fact makes all the more evident the sacred and divine mission of Tamburlaine as the Scourge of God. He is the chosen warrior, one out of all the great names of his times in the play as well as in history. His mission transcends that of any other stage character. As a matter of fact, the God of Tamburlaine presides over the play and makes his power and justice felt through Tamburlaine, his Scourge, a pattern of divine action very Biblical in its nature. This association of Tamburlaine with the wrathful Jehovah of the Bible opens the door to hosts of analogies which can be drawn between Tamburlaine and the Biblical heroes. Tamburlaine is thus set against a background dominated by the fearsome God of the Bible. However imaginary this divinely-directed background may be, by it, numerous and constant inferences can link the dramatic hero with this vast panorama of the religious history of mankind. The effect of these inferences cannot be other than to expand the dimensions of Marlowe's hero into a kind of semi-divine infinity. In this Biblical perspective, Tamburlaine could not help but become an all-meaningful character to his Elizabethan spectators.

---

81. For a description of this wrathful God of the Bible, see below, pp. 506 ff.

One more trait about Tamburlaine's God which would have struck a note of sympathy among the Elizabethans must not be overlooked. At one point, Tamburlaine boasts of the protection he enjoys from "the chiefest God, first moover of that Spheare" (1T 4.2.8). This first mover of the empyreal heaven,[82] as Tamburlaine claims, would rather destroy the frame of the universe than overthrow him (1T 4.2.8-11). These lines could not but evoke the theories of the Ptolemaic system of the universe which had held their sway for centuries.[83] By this one line, Marlowe evoked the panorama of the cosmos and the place of its Maker. The Elizabethan metaphysician would easily have recognized one of the Aristotelian proofs of the existence of God,[84] a proof which had been adapted and popularized by Aquinas since the twelfth century. This concept also recalled the existence of the "unmoved Mover" in relation to the structure of the universe, a concept undoubtedly familiar to the Elizabethan. Thus, by these references, Marlowe evoked the panorama of the cosmic universe, the place of its maker, and suggested the position of the hero with respect to each.

There remains to clarify the ambiguous use of the word "Jove" as opposed to "God". In some cases, Marlowe's use of the word "Jove" leaves no doubts whatever about its meaning. It is obviously clear from the text that the Jove who is mentioned in connection with the astrological configurations governing the destiny of the feeble-minded Mycetes (1T 1.1.13-15) is nothing more than one of the planets however deified. It is also clear

---

82. The empyrean or the immovable outermost sphere of the universe was the abode of God, the first mover of all the other spheres: see Jump, ed. cit., n. 7, p. 41, notes.

83. See U. M. Ellis-Fermor, ed., Tamburlaine the Great in Two Parts (London, 1930), p. 141, n. Another theory about creation, especially about the lights of the firmament springing into being, was that creation had taken form from chaos. This idea was suggested in some Biblical texts: see Gen. 1:2 and B.V., Gen. 1:2, n. (a). Marlowe explains creation in a similar manner except that the agent of creation was Nature instead of God: see 2T 3.4.75-77.

84. See ibid.

that the Jove who has ousted his father Saturn from his throne (1T 2.7.13-15, 36) and who has scaled the heavens disguised as a shepherd (1T 1.2.199-200) is no more than one of the many mythological deities whom Tamburlaine likes to imitate and tries to outdo. So is Jove's rival, the infernal Jove or Pluto, a "king as absolute" as Jove (2T 4.3.32 ff.), ruler of the devils of the underworld (2T 1.3.143 ff.), the black Jove whom Tamburlaine would like to force to crouch and kneel to him (2T 5.1.98). So is the Jove to whom Tamburlaine advantageously compares himself when he refers to Zenocrate as another Juno calming the rage of an angry Jupiter (1T 3.3.123). The crowned Zenocrate, "lovelier than the Love of Jove" (1T 1.2.87) rules over all the lands subdued by Tamburlaine as Juno did after Jove had defeated the giants (1T 5.1.510-511). Quite naturally, Tamburlaine suspects that his rival, the amorous Jove, has snatched away Zenocrate (2T 2.4.107). This "amorous Jove" would seem to be the "angrie Jupiter" whose force Tamburlaine is challenging (1T 2.6.4), the Jove whom Tamburlaine imagines as viewing him all "pale and wan", (1T 5.1.452). In all these instances, Marlowe clearly is referring to the Jove of the mythological deities whom Tamburlaine is trying to impersonate. Thus meanings cluster around the word "Jove", ranging from the name of a planet, to the mythological deity of the Romans, to even the highest God of Christianity.

For, in several places, Marlowe freely substitutes the name of Jove in places where the reader would naturally expect a reference to the Christian God. Orcanes speaks of Christ, who was "the sonne of God" (2T 1.1.134) elsewhere in the play, as the "son to everliving Jove" (2T 2.2.41). Tamburlaine occasionally calls himself "the Scourge of highest Jove" (2T 4.3.24)[85] whereas he is normally termed the "Scourge of God" as Orcanes previously has noted (2T 3.5.21). The God-Jove equation would seem to be implied in some lines referring to Mahomet. Zenocrate prays to "mighty Jove and holy Mahomet" (1T 5.1.363) and Mahomet opens the

---

85. The expression "highest God" occurs in B.V., Tobit 3:24.

firmament with Jove according to Callapine (2T 3.5.55-56). Because of the customary usage of associating Mahomet with God, Jove in these instances could be another name for God. Elsewhere, the idea of God as ruler of the "Emperiall heaven"[86] is translated into that of Jove with the "imperiall Orbe" as his vast palace (2T 3.4.49). Both were the abodes of God.[87] Thus, as was often encountered in the literature of the period, Jove and God are easily interchangeable.

However, Marlowe seems to reserve the use of Jove instead of God for certain special cases. Whenever a direct divine intervention in favour of Tamburlaine is alluded to, or whenever an action of a practical nature performed by the God of Scourges is implied, the dramatist uses the Jove appellation instead of the word "God". Thus, Tamburlaine boasts that Jove, not God, stretches out his hand to protect him (1T 1.2.178-181) and that the hand of Jove has crowned and invested him as Arch-Monarch of the world (2T 4.1.150-151). Tamburlaine identifies himself as "the wrathfull messenger of mighty Jove" (2T 5.1.92) and not of God. This messenger plans to pursue his plans of massive slaughters until, as he says, "Jove shall send his winged Messenger / To bid me sheath my sword, and leave the field" (2T 1.3. 166-167), or again, as he tells his colleagues, until "I heare /Immortall Jove say, Cease my Tamburlaine" (2T 4.1.198-199). Marlowe makes Tamburlaine consider entering "the christall gates of Joves high court" (2T 1.3. 153), not God's; Tamburlaine despatches his messengers to "the court of Jove" (2T 5.3.61) to fetch medicine to cure him (2T 5.3.61-63) In all these instances, a direct intervention on the part of a divine power or a practical kind of assistance is expected from a deity. Marlowe refrains from using the word "God" in such instances as the responsible agent in the same way that he makes not God but "the majestie of heaven beholde / Their Scourge

---

86. See above p. 466 and n. 82.

87. See ibid.

and Terrour" treading on emperors (1T 4.2. 31-32).[88] To refer to God as the acting agent in these cases would seem to confine this deity into a limited time and space totally incompatible with God's infinity. Concrete and practical activities of this nature, especially on behalf of a controversial character like Tamburlaine, are better suited to a humanized kind of pagan deity like Jove rather than to the "highest God" of the Biblical world. By substituting the agent Jove for God, Marlowe opens a make-believe world in which the imaginations of poet and reader can reconcile infinity with the finite, the absolute reality of God with the dream-world of Tamburlaine and his aspirations. It opens the possibility of associating Tamburlaine with the divine in concrete situations and yet keep him within the human dimensions that he will have to face before the end of the play. By the use of this poetic device, Marlowe could happily have his hero consort with the highest divinity and yet avoid presenting the highest God in a familiar and possibly disrespectful relationship with a character like Tamburlaine. A God-Tamburlaine relationship masked under the guise of a Jove-Tamburlaine one obviously was more acceptable to Christian eyes and ears than a God-Tamburlaine would have been.

At times, Marlowe chooses to make Jove hold sway over life and death. Tamburlaine angrily commits the dead body of his unworthy son Calyphas to Jove as his unworthy source (2T 4.1.111 ff.). Tamburlaine claims he shall die because Jove esteems him too good for the earth (2T 4.3. 60 ff.), but that he sends him a medicine in the form of a new engagement on the battlefield to cure him (2T 5.3.105-106), temporarily at least. Again, did Marlowe consider this kind of familiarity between Tamburlaine and Jove unworthy of the highest God? The meaning of "Jove" in these last instances is ambiguous and determines to a large extent the religious quality

---

88. God is described as "the throne of the majestie in the heauens": G.V., Heb. 8:1. See also B.V., Tobit 3:24 (G.V., Tobit 3:16).

of Tamburlaine. The hero's angry challenge put to Jove in the scene of the slaying of his son is rebelliously blasphemous to say the least if his anger is directed against the highest God, but quite acceptable if this Jove is simply a humanized deity akin to Tamburlaine the god. On the other hand, in view of Tamburlaine being termed as the "choisest living fire" of heaven (2T 5.3.252), in view of Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God, being reclaimed by Jove who thinks him too good for this earth, the meaning underlying the word "Jove" remains open to question. Thus, for reasons explained above, the use of the word "Jove" is ambiguous, deliberately so probably on the part of the dramatist. This manner of referring to a deity is possibly meant to create ambiguity around the moral entity of Tamburlaine himself. For the Scythian is not necessarily the just and righteous leader which his dramatic function as Scourge of God in the play might lead the audience to expect. Neither is he an altogether evil character; his zeal in destroying the idolatrous Turks would elicit the sympathy of the Christians.

In the light of the above clarifications about the deity which seems to preside over the activity of the play through the person of Tamburlaine as a Scourge of God, a note should be added about two instances when the word "God" itself appears to be used in a most ambiguous manner. On these two occasions, Tamburlaine queries as to "What God" is responsible for the events which have just taken place. The first one occurs after the death of Zenocrate. Tamburlaine, stricken with grief, longing for the presence of his queen, wonders what god is now enjoying her company (2T 2.4.109). As has been pointed out before, the context of Tamburlaine's rivalry with Mahomet added to the Moslem notions about heaven, might suggest the jealous fears of Tamburlaine to be focused on Mahomet.[89] However, the immediate context of the play would rather indicate that this god might be the

---

89. See above, pp. 311 ff. and notes.

"amorous Jove" of mythology who, according to Tamburlaine, has snatched Zenocrate from him. The ambiguity around Tamburlaine's God keeps the discussion about Tamburlaine's allegiance open, at least in this scene, and its effect on the play. Consequently, Tamburlaine remains a figure perpetually at one with and estranged from the Highest God at the same time. The enigma remains unsolved and Tamburlaine continues to tease his audiences. Whatever criticism might be made against the use of this "What God", the dramatist can safely say that it refers to no more than to one of the minor deities, Jove or Mahomet, both being no more than equals or inferiors to Tamburlaine; it may, therefore, be considered as quite innocuous.

The second instance is more ambiguous. It may be therefore, more significant in determining Tamburlaine's religious allegiances. Tamburlaine, suddenly feeling ill, cries out "What daring God torments my body thus/ And seeks to conquer mighty Tamburlaine?" (2T 5.3.42-43). Marlovian scholars have interpreted these lines as a cry of the rebellious Tamburlaine against God and against the truth of his own human nature, as an indication of a blasphemous heart. Others have detected signs of atheism in these lines. However, perhaps the dramatist meant this cry of a Tamburlaine taken ill by surprise to be simply in keeping with the hero's character. Tamburlaine has applied himself in the course of almost ten whole acts to raise himself to the ranks of the powerful gods. He has taken pains to surpass the angry Jove and Mars, the god of war. He has successfully triumphed over the last god offering him opposition, that is, Mahomet in the presence of Islam and his creed. Is it any wonder that Tamburlaine might question as to what god there might be left to challenge him? Tamburlaine immediately takes this threat as an attempt to defeat him. Surely he does not think he is stricken ill by the God of Scourges in whose faithful service he has been. Unless the god Tamburlaine challenges, because he dare torment him, is meant to be the highest God,[90] whose Scourge he has been, nowhere in the play does

90. Marlowe may have used this device to emphasize the duality of Tamburlaine's nature by creating or preserving around his hero ambiguous associations of good and evil.

"amorous Jove" of mythology who, according to Tamburlaine, has snatched Zenocrate from him. The ambiguity around Tamburlaine's God keeps the discussion about Tamburlaine's allegiance open, at least in this scene, and its effect on the play. Consequently, Tamburlaine remains a figure perpetually at one with and estranged from the Highest God at the same time. The enigma remains unsolved and Tamburlaine continues to tease his audiences. Whatever criticism might be made against the use of this "What God", the dramatist can safely say that it refers to no more than to one of the minor deities, Jove or Mahomet, both being no more than equals or inferiors to Tamburlaine; it may, therefore, be considered as quite innocuous.

The second instance is more ambiguous. It may be therefore, more significant in determining Tamburlaine's religious allegiances. Tamburlaine, suddenly feeling ill, cries out "What daring God torments my body thus/ And seeks to conquer mighty Tamburlaine?" (2T 5.3.42-43). Marlovian scholars have interpreted these lines as a cry of the rebellious Tamburlaine against God and against the truth of his own human nature, as an indication of a blasphemous heart. Others have detected signs of atheism in these lines. However, perhaps the dramatist meant this cry of a Tamburlaine taken ill by surprise to be simply in keeping with the hero's character. Tamburlaine has applied himself in the course of almost ten whole acts to raise himself to the ranks of the powerful gods. He has taken pains to surpass the angry Jove and Mars, the god of war. He has successfully triumphed over the last god offering him opposition, that is, Mahomet in the presence of Islam and his creed. Is it any wonder that Tamburlaine might question as to what god there might be left to challenge him? Tamburlaine immediately takes this threat as an attempt to defeat him. Surely he does not think he is stricken ill by the God of Scourges in whose faithful service he has been. Unless the god Tamburlaine challenges, because he dare torment him, is meant to be the highest God,[90] whose Scourge he has been, nowhere in the play does

90. Marlowe may have used this device to emphasize the duality of Tamburlaine's nature by creating or preserving around his hero ambiguous associations of good and evil.

Tamburlaine manifest any rebellious or blasphemous attitudes towards this God. On the contrary, this God of Scourges is the only God Tamburlaine is willing to obey. Ultimately, Tamburlaine resigns himself to the ordeal of death, as the Scourge of God who must die, without any evident signs of a rebellious spirit. Because Tamburlaine's illness comes fast upon the burning of the Koran, because Amasia has subsequently projected the vision of a rising Mahomet onto the mind of the audience, possibly the Elizabethan spectators readily understood this expression to mean that Mahomet was the god taking his revenge upon Tamburlaine and surely not the God of Scourges. Except for Robert Greene, whose caustic remarks about Tamburlaine[91] are suspected to have been inspired more by envy than by concern about objectionable traits in the play, this line possibly posed no moral problems to the Elizabethans. In fact, it probably helped them to associate Tamburlaine with a certain Biblical scourge, as will be pointed out later,[92] and, therefore, to have a clearer idea of just who Marlowe's Tamburlaine might be.

Thus in the light of this examination, the gods and deities in the play sort themselves out to some degree into various categories. There are the gods of a lower order which Tamburlaine considers as equals or as forces which he aims to excel, supplant, or annihilate. Opposed to these deities is the Highest God[93] whom Tamburlaine respects at all times. Except for the two questioned instances mentioned above, an attentive reader or spectator will realize that there is no ambiguity about which kinds of deities Tamburlaine holds in scorn nor about the divinity he honours and

---

91. See above, pp. 19-20 and p. 33, n. 4.

92. See below, pp. 565 ff.

93. The Bible explains what may be meant by the expression "Highest God" in the following praise addressed to this God: "For thou art a God higher than al...the earth: thou art exalted farre aboue al gods": B.V., Ps. 97:9, T.H. The "Highest God" is singled out by his abode in relation to the earth and by his position with regard to lesser gods. Little wonder that the process of self-deification manifests itself, among other ways, by aspiring to be of the stars, or gods, and by defeating the lesser gods each their turn.

respects. Even the ambiguous use of the name "Jove" seems to resolve itself, at least to some extent. Involvement in immediate life situations seems to be assumed by the "highest Jove"[94] while the "Highest God" determines and somewhat endorses the actions of Tamburlaine as his Scourge. While the traits of this God are in keeping with those of the divinity venerated by the Moslems,[95] this God of Scourges seems to project an image strikingly similar to that of the wrathful God of the Bible. These considerations lead us to analyse the Biblical aspects of the God of Tamburlaine, the sacred character and stature of Tamburlaine in his role as Scourge, his relationship with the God on whose behalf he is acting as his Scourge, and the dramatic expression of this role and relationship in the play itself.

As was suggested above,[96] the expression "Scourge of God" drawn from Tamburlaine's chroniclers and used by Marlowe probably evoked in the minds of the Elizabethan spectators definite and clear-cut notions about how Scourges emerged from the crowd, what the general pattern of their careers would be, the specific purpose of their presence, and the ways and means by which scourges fulfilled their mission. The expression had a long history[97] and probably conjured up more than one character, Biblical or other, whose presence and role precisely seemed best defined by that phrase. These ideas and associations principally had their roots in the Biblical texts and commentaries with which the Elizabethans had more than a passing acquaintance. There is no reason to believe that Marlowe was an exception to this rule. On the contrary, his several Biblical allusions found else-

---

94. In some cases, Marlowe alludes to "heaven" as he would to "Jove" instead of to God: see 1T 1.2.157; 2.1.52; 2.3.7; 4.2.31; 5.1.48; 2T 1.3.155.

95. See above, pp. 463 ff. and p. 464, notes 76, 77.

96. See above, pp. 453 ff.

97. See above, pp. 449 ff.

where in his works[98] undeniably point to the dramatist's familiarity with the Bible and opens up the possibility that the concept of the Biblical Scourge could well have been the principal source he used to fashion his hero.

The criticism which the reader may make about placing any significance on several Biblical allusions and references pointed out later is that these allusions and references are not very obvious in the play, that many are commonplace, and consequently, that they add little towards a clearer understanding of Marlowe's text. In reply to such a criticism, one must remind the reader that the various translations of the Bible into the popular idiom had largely contributed towards the development of the English language as it was spoken and written by the end of the sixteenth century. However badly read or poorly commented the Biblical texts are reputed to have been by the incompetent lower clergy of the Post-Reformation period, according to some historians and writers of or on that period, the particular flavour of the Biblical language was never yet very far removed from the popular idiom. What has become commonplace and devoid of any specific Biblical connotations for the modern man may not have been so to Marlowe's contemporaries. Contrary to the modern man's reading experience of the Biblical text, a text which has preserved a distinctive literary quality of its own, quite different from that of his daily idiom, the Elizabethan's everyday expressions were often interchangeable with those of the Holy Writ. In this way, the Elizabethan could preserve a close familiarity with the Biblical text and themes. He could transpose quite naturally some of the following allusions or points made, apparently commonplace to the modern reader, into commonplaces of another order at the level of Biblical language and episodes. In other words, Marlowe's dramatic idiom was possibly far richer with Biblical connotations than would appear today.

---

98. The only Biblical book named in Marlowe's works is that of the Maccabees: see J.M. 2.3.153. But his plays contain many literal allusions to the Biblical texts.

These connotations could help to supplement the lack of dramatic material needed to fashion his hero as a typical "Scourge and Wrath of God".

The main aspects one may query about Biblical Scourges are their origin and their special prerogatives and functions; one may then see how these aspects square with Tamburlaine as Scourge of God, or vice versa, how Tamburlaine squares with them. As was noted before, the mysterious appearance of Timur on the Eastern-European scene, his part in the Turco-Christian conflict followed by his equally mysterious and sudden retreat into the remote regions of Asia had baffled his European contemporaries. From what superhuman sources did this warrior draw his boundless energy? What unearthly hand had guided him in his chain of victories to the timely rescue of the desperate Christians of Constantinople? Faced with the dearth of details about him, chroniclers of the Christian world quite naturally would turn to the Biblical heroes of a similar mettle and scale with which they were familiar and easily define the action and character of Tamerlane as a personified "ire of God". This was the image of Tamerlane which had passed down through the generations and which Marlowe had met through his reading. The dramatist, probably well-versed on the facts about these great leaders of the Bible, could expand upon the idea of Tamburlaine as the "Scourge and Wrath of God" by drawing upon his Biblical knowledge in order to portray and magnify his stage hero. By adroitly introducing the suitable line or expression, the dramatist could suggest precise Biblical analogies and parallels in the mind of his audience. These could provide a body of connotations and inferences which would help to build up the dramatic entity of Tamburlaine and explain in some measure his spiritual role and dimension.

How did the Biblical Scourges of God emerge from their anonymous position as individuals lost among their own contemporaries and become entrusted with shaping or redirecting the destiny of peoples and nations? How did God single out his scourges or, for that matter, any of his special

agents? How did the chosen individual in the Bible become aware that he was summoned to fulfil any special mission? How did he come by the necessary inner assurance that he was to accomplish great deeds upon God's wishes?

It is said in the Bible that God made known his will principally through dreams and visions.[99] Instances of such communications in the Bible were numerous. Joseph had been blessed with dreams foretelling his future rule over the other members of his family.[100] As a matter of fact, he had risen to a high position of responsibility in the court of Pharaoh by correctly interpreting the latter's two disturbing dreams predicting a famine.[101] In the same manner, Balaam had been instructed about the curses he was not to cast upon Israel.[102] Abraham's mission as a leader of Israel [103] and Gideon's career as a warrior of God [104] had been confirmed through the agency of dreams and visions. . Divine messages of this nature occurred frequently in the course of the Old and the New Testaments and were generally recognized as God's means of making his

---

99. Visions and dreams were recognized as God's two principal means of communicating with his people: see G.V., Num. 12:6, n. (c). See also Ps. 89:19; Isa. 1:1; G.V., Isa. 21:6, n. (i); B.V., Dan. 1:17, n. (h); Dan. 2:1, 19; 7:1.

100. For the story of Joseph's dreams, see Gen. 37.

101. For the story of the dreams of Pharaoh, see Gen. 41. So had Daniel been promoted for the same reasons: see Dan. 1:17.

102. See Num. 22 and G.V., Num. 22:12, n. (f). Marlowe's lines about God's vengeance falling "to Saule. to Balaam and the rest,/ That would not kill and curse at Gods command" (2T 2.1.54-55) possibly rather reflect the dramatist's economy and complexities of style than justify Ellis-Fermor's suppositions that "Marlowe's scriptural knowledge is not so sound as his knowledge of Ovid, for Balaam's position is the converse of Sigismund's": see ed. cit., n. 83, p. 207, n. Marlowe's simple phrase "At Gods command" is made to describe two radically opposed situations. Saul did not kill in spite of God's command to do so (see 1 Sam. 15) while Balaam did not curse because of God's command not to. It may be noted, however, that, like Frederick, both Saul and Balaam were acting out of self-interest.

103. See Gen. 15.

104. See Judges 7:13.

wishes known and of directing his servants in the fulfilling of their specially-assigned missions.

Dreams and visions were often prophetic[105] as they had been in the case of Joseph and the Pharaoh and, therefore, were easily associated with prophets. Prophets, as spokesmen of dreams, visions, and prophecies, were thus another channel of communication used by God to choose, guide, and instruct the leaders of his people. The theme of prophets and prophecies spelt a long line of Biblical characters and incidents which had played an important part in the history of Israel. The prophet was generally understood to be close to God; the Bible easily equated the term with "man of God".[106] Prophets were in on the secrets of God and were his means of directing his people. During the peregrination of Israel through the desert, God had plainly said to his people: "If there be a Prophet of the Lord among you, I wil be knowen to him by a vision, and will speake vnto him by dreame".[107] Thus, the prophet was a man who had heard the words of God,[108] had the knowledge of the most High,[109] had seen the vision of the Almighty.[110] The role of the prophet was so determined by God himself that he could declare: "I haue also spoken by the Prophetes".[111] The annotator of the Bishops Bible observes that there "is no difference made betweene the woorde of the prophet, and the word of God".[112] In fact, the

---

105. The G.V. annotator treats "visions" as synonymous with "prophecy": see G.V., Isa. 1:1, n. (a).

106. The G.V. subtitles Ps. 90 as follows: "A praier of Moses, the man of God". "Thus the Scripture vseth to call the Prophetes", says the Geneva Bible: see G.V., Ps. 90, n. (a). See also G.V., Jer. 35:4, n. (c). The same expression is used again in connection with Moses in Deut. 33:1.

107. G.V., Num. 12:6. Thus "God declared him selfe to his seruants in olde time": G.V., Isa. 1:1, n. (a)

108. See Num. 24:16.

109. See ibid.

110. See ibid.

111. G.V., Hos. 12:10. The G.V. explains the prophets as those "to whome God declared his worde, and thei declared it to their posteritie": 1 Chr. 16:22, n. (l).

112. B.V., Hag. 1:12, n. (k). The G.V. annotator points out that God's

cont'd./

prophet was expected to speak and the people to hear through him the words of God himself.[113] They were "the messengers of God",[114] fulfilled the same ministry as that accredited to the angels, and were sometimes mistaken for them.[115] God was the author of the doctrine and the prophet his minister.[116] Thus, the prophet was stirred[117] or called by God,[118] was endowed with the spirit of prophecy,[119] and was confirmed[120] and assured[121] in his mission by God. Dreams, visions,[122] wonders[123] were experiences familiar to him.

Footnote No. 112 cont'd./

speaking by his prophets is "as muche as thogh he shulde speake to vs him selfe when he sendeth his ministers to speake in his Name": G.V., Jer. 35:17, n. (l).

113. See B.V., Hag. 1:12, n. (k).

114. Haggai, the prophet, was called "the Lord's messenger": see Hag. 1:13.

115. The B.V. has this explanation for "angel": "A prophet or messenger as some think ...: others think it was an angelical spirite sent of god, and appearyng to doo this message": B.V., Judges 2:1, n. (a).

116. See G.V., Hag. 1:12, n. (k).

117. "The Lorde thy God wyl stirre vp vnto thee a prophete among you, euen of thy brethren ...": B.V., Deut. 18:15.

118. The prophet "did not presume of him self to preache and prophecie, but was called thereunto by God": G.V., Jer. 1:2, n. (d). In fact, prophecy was "geuen to whom it pleaseth God": B.V., 1 Sam. 10:12, n. (g).

119. Of the seventy elders who became prophets, the Bible says: "And when the Spirit rested vpon them,then they prophecied, and did not cease". To this is added: "From that day, the Spirit of prophecie did not faile them": see G.V., Num. 11:25 and n. (p). "The hande of the Lorde" was upon Ezekiel or "the spirite of prophesie": see B.V., Ezek. 1:3 and n. (b). See also G.V., Dan. 5:14, n. (k); Joel 2:28; G.V., Amos 3:8 and n. (i).

120. See G.V., Jer. 1:2, n. (d).Also"God is sayde to stirre vp our spirites, when he moueth our hartes by the power of the spirite, boldly to take in hand and perfectly to finish that which he commaundeth": B.V., Hag. 1:14, n. (n).

121. Self-assurance was important to carry out these unusual assignments asked by the Lord. "The Prophet being assured of his vocation by the Spirit of God, setteth him self alone against all the wicked, shewing how God bothe gaue him giftes, habilitie, and knowledge, to discerne betwene good and euil, and also constancie to reproue the sinnes of the people, and not to flatter them": G.V., Mic. 3:8, n. (g). By the spirit of prophecy, David also assured himself that he should succeed in overcoming his enemies: see G.V., Ps. 27:6, n. (d).

122. See Hos. 12:10.

123. "And I will show wonders in heaven and in earth: blood and fire, and pillars of smoke": Joel 2:30. See also Joel 2:28.

The prophets were God's elect people;[124] they were sanctified.[125] No harm must befall upon them.[126] To scorn these messengers was to provoke the wrath of God.[127] Those who refused to hear the words of the prophet would be liable to punishment.[128]

The function of the Biblical prophet was to speak forth the message which had been communicated to him through divine inspiration, whether these communications dealt with practical duties or future events.[129] Therefore, to prophesy meant to speak by divine inspiration, to foretell events of the future, to explain difficult points of religious issues, to preach and exhort the people.[130] By resolving controversies,[131] by showing evils to come,[132] by pointing out the remedies[133] which could avert these evils and divine chastisements, by declaring God's will[134] in various situations, the prophet could play a significant role in procuring the general and moral welfare of his social group. Politically, prophets had been largely accountable for the liberation of Israel from the bondage of

---

124. See G.V., 1 Chr. 16:22, n. (k).

125. See ibid. The G.V. equates the word "sanctifie" with "prepare": see G.V., Jer. 22:7, n. (d). See also B.V., Jer. 1:5.

126. "... do my prophets no harm": 1 Chr. 16:22.

127. See 2 Chr. 36:16.

128. "And whosoeuer wyl not hearken vnto my woordes which he shall speake in my name, I wyl require it of hym". The B.V. explains the last words as "I wil punishe hym for it": see B.V., Deut. 18:19 and n. (g).

129. See OCC. p. 236, art. "Prophet".

130. See ibid., art. "Prophecy".

131. See G.V., Judges 4:4, n. (c).

132. See G.V., Gen. 41:33, n. (i). See also G.V., Jonah 3:5, n. (d).

133. See B.V., Gen. 41:33, n. (m).

134. See G.V., Judges 4:4, n. (c).

Egypt,[135] for the consolidation of the kingdom of Israel,[136] and for the rehabilitation of Israel after the Babylonian captivity.[137] Moses, David, and even the pagan Cyrus, who was recognized as a prophet,[138] were but three out of many who had been responsible, in this case, each for one of these phases in the history of Israel. Theirs, along with that of many others,[139] had been remarkable careers, rising from the humble ranks of shepherds to the ultimate height in leadership or power. At times, the spirit of prophecy could effect extraordinary changes in men and radically transform them into new personalities.[140] This had been one of the achievements of the Spirit of God upon the heart of Saul. He had been "turned into another man"[141] for "God gave him another heart".[142] Instantly, God had given him "suche vertues, as were meete for a kynge".[143]

For all these reasons, the prestige of prophets and prophecies was extraordinary. Biblical texts have much to say about this. Suffice it to note a few points. Prophets and prophecies answered the nation's or the individual's need to know God's will in particular times and circumstances.[144]

---

135. See Judges 10:11; G.V., Hos. 12:13 and n. (m). Numerous are the allusions to the role of prophets in the liberation of Israel from the influence of idolaters, from Egypt in particular.

136. This had been mainly the contribution of David: see 2 Sam 2: 5; 8; 10; 12:29; 21:15;1 Chr.18-20; Ps. 60.

137. This had been largely the achievement of Cyrus, king of the Persians: see below, pp. 567 ff.

138. Cyrus "was esteemed in Babylon as a prophete ...": B.V., Dan. 1:21, n. (k).

139. See Amos 7:14. "Thus he sheweth by his extraordinarie vocation that God had giuen him a charge which he must nedes execute": G.V., Amos 7:14, n. (h).

140. According to the Biblical annotator, this change was deemed necessary as "men are vnapt and dull to serue the Lord, neither can thei obey his worde or his messengers before God reforme their hearts and giue them new spirits": G.V., Hag. 1:14, n. (l).

141. 1 Sam. 10:6.

142. 1 Sam. 10:9.

143. B.V., 1 Sam. 10:9, n. (e).

144. See G.V., 2 Kgs. 3:12, n. (g).

Because of his close relationship with God, the prophet was invested with a power and authority unmatched by that of any other character or office.[145] For the same reason, threats uttered by a prophet were most effective tools to discipline the wicked.[146] The presence of a prophet was a blessing in itself. While his presence was a guarantee of success and victory in the case of battles,[147] his absence could spell defeat.[148] A king inspired by prophecies could not err in judgement.[149] Even in the event of disasters like the Babylonian captivity, by foreseeing the day when the people's miseries would come to an end, the prophet could be a living symbol of hope.[150] Because of his intermediary position between God and man, the prophet fulfilled a priestly function. Samuel had been the highly revered priest-prophet of Israel; David as a ruler combined the priest-prophet-king offices in the government of his people. Thus the prophet was associated with the most honoured positions of power and prestige, religious and secular.

Not all the prophets were true ones. Their authenticity could be tested. True prophets were credited with power over the elements, with the ability to work wonders, usually over nature. To be able to draw the fire from heaven upon idols was the standard test;[151] Moses had proved himself by his series of wonders.[152] The other test of a prophet's integrity lay

---

145. See B.V., Exod. 7:1, n. (a).

146. See B.V., 2 Kgs. 1:10, n. (b).

147. "Geue credence to his prophetes, and so shal ye prosper": B.V., 2 Chr. 20:20. By the Spirit of prophecy, God gave Jonathan the assurance of victory: see B.V., 1 Sam. 14:9, n. (d). See also G.V., Ps. 27:6 and n. (d).

148. Again in the cases of Saul and Samuel, "the absence of the prophete was a signe, that they shoulde lose the victorie": B.V., 1 Sam. 13:8, n. (f).

149. See B.V., Prov. 16:10.

150. "They lament that they haue no Prophet among them to shewe them how long their miseries shulde endure": G.V., Ps. 74:9, n. (f).

151. For the Baal incident, see above pp. 321 ff.

152. See Exod. 3, 7, etc.

in his ability to foretell events. The term "divination" suggested the intervention of a divine power. The God of Israel taunted idols by challenging their power to make their words come true.[153] He proved himself by making his promises come to pass.[154] Contrary to idols, God performed whatever he had said he would do.[155] Similarly, the prophet proved his claims to prophecy when his predictions came true. Ezekiel[156] and David[157] among the many Biblical prophets, had convinced their contemporaries of their own authenticity by this means. Samuel was believed because those who knew him could affirm the following: "All that he saith cometh surely to pass".[158] Samuel could foretell the future "because he sawe gods wyl reueiled vnto him by his diuine spirite, and for that he foresawe thinges to comme".[159] Samuel grew and the Lord "leaft none of his woordes vnperfourmed".[160] This proved that God and his prophet worked together and, therefore, "the Lord accomplished whatsoeuer he had said"[161] through his prophet. Because of this, "al Israel ... wist that faythful Samuel was the

---

153. See Isa. 41 especially verses 22, 23, etc.

154. G.V., Isa. 42:9, n. (p). See also Ps. 33:9; Isa. 46:10; 48:3, 5; Jer. 1:12.

155. God "sheweth that thei colde not accuse Him in anie thing for asmuche as he had performed whatsoeuer he had promised": G.V., Isa. 48:3, n. (d). "For I the Lorde speake it, and whatsoeuer I shal speake, it shalbe perfourmed ... yea euen in your dayes, O rebellious house, wyl I speake the thing, and bring it to passe , sayth the Lorde God": B.V., Ezek. 12:25.

156. "When this cometh to pass (lo, it will come), then they shall know that a prophet hath been among them": Ezek. 33:33. The prophet is Ezekiel himself.

157. "It is so certeine, as if it were spoken by an oracle, that I shal possesse these places, which Saul had left to his children": G.V., Ps. 60:6, n. (g). See also G.V., Matt. 11:13, n. (h).

158. 1 Sam. 9:6.

159. B.V., 1 Sam. 9:9, n. (e).

160. B.V., 1 Sam. 3:19.

161. G.V., 1 Sam. 3:19, n. (l).

prophete of the Lorde".[162] These remarks applied to all true prophets.

False prophets were quite a different matter. Their appearance could be accompanied by signs and wonders[163] and they sometimes did foretell the future accurately,[164] but, in general, if their prophecies failed to materialize, this was taken as "one sure token"[165] that they were false prophets.[166] These false prophets, who claimed they had knowledge revealed to them in dreams,[167] were reputed to be dreamers of dreams.[168] Holy Scripture warned against believing one's own dreams,[169] that dreams were not to be credited,[170] that fools who trusted in dreams[171] were "like him that wyl take holde of a shadowe".[172] The Bishops Bible even specified that "dremes makes fooles to have winges"[173] and "folowe after the wynde".[174] Possibly the word "dream" in these passages did not always include the notion of the prophetic dream but, nevertheless, there was an element of unreality and deceit in false dreams or in the dreams of the false prophet. These

---

162. B.V., 1 Sam. 3:20.

163. "If there arise among you a prophet, ... and giveth thee a sign or a wonder" says the Bible about false prophets in Deut. 13:1. See also Matt. 24:24.

164. The Geneva Bible explains the Cretan mentioned by Titus as follows: "He calleth Epimenides the Philosopher, or Poet, whose verse he here reciteth, a Prophet, because the Cretians so estemed him;..., for asmuche as he had a marueilous gift to vnderstand things to come: which thing Satan by the permission of God hathe opened to the infideles from time to time, but it turneth to their greater damnacion": G.V., Titus 1:12, n. (k).

165. B.V., Deut. 18:22, n. (h).

166. See Deut. 18:22.

167. See G.V., Deut. 13:1, n. (a).

168. See Deut. 13:1, 3, 5.

169. See B.V., Jer. 29:8.

170. See B.V., Ecclus. 5:6, n. (d). See also B.V., G.V., Ecclus. 34:7.

171. See B.V., Ecclus. 34:1.

172. B.V., Ecclus. 34:2.

173. B.V., Ecclus, 34:1, gloss.

174. B.V., Ecclus. 34:2.

dreams could not but lead the individual astray, away from the truth,[175] including the truth and reality of God. False prophets preached lies in God's name,[176] prophesied "lyeing dreames",[177] were not sent by God[178] but followed their own spirit having really seen nothing.[179] False prophets were even said to be under the domination of the devil. At some point in the history of God's people, the devil had threatened to be "a false spirit in the mouthe of all his prophetes",[180] the threat being interpreted as causing "all his prophetes to tel lies".[181] Indeed, Satan was reputed to use these deceitful dreams to draw the people away from God.[182] The New Testament presented false prophets as dangerous thieves and robbers,[183] as ravenous wolves dressed in sheep's clothing.[184] They would be recognized by their fruit.[185] They would cause people to err[186] by flattering them,[187] by promising plenty,[188] by telling alluringly pleasant tales,[189] by instigating rebellious actions and attitudes against those in authority.[190]

---

175. The annotator of the Bishops Bible warns that "honour, riches, pleasures, and suche lyke, are but as dreames, wherein fooles doo glory: for when they awake from their long sleepe, this thyng shalbe vanquished /sic/ cleane away": B. V., Ecclus. 34:1, gloss.

176. See B.V., Jer. 23:25. See also B.V., Jer. 14:14; 23:31.

177. See B.V., Jer. 23:32.

178. See B.V., Jer. 23:21; 29:9.

179. See Ezek. 13:3. See also B.V., Mic. 2:11, n. (c).

180. G.V., 1 Kgs. 22:22. See also 2 Chr. 18:21.

181. G.V., 1 Kgs. 22:22, n. (r).

182. See Jer. 23:27 and G.V., Jer. 23:27, n. (u).

183. See John 10:8, B.V., John 10:8, n. (a) and G.V., John 10:8, n. (b).

184. See Matt. 7:15.

185. See Matt. 7:16.

186. See Jer. 23:32.

187. See G.V., Jer. 23:32; B.V., Mic. 2:11, n. (d); G.V., Mic. 2:11, n. (n).

188. See B.V., Mic. 2:11, n. (d).

189. See G.V., Mic. 2:11, n. (n).

190. See B.V., G.V., Jude 8.

In spite of the fact that God could use the evil and obnoxious false prophets to punish evil[191] or act as scourges, these prophets were doomed to be destroyed[192] by the hand of God.[193] Like their followers, God threatened to send them in captivity into Babylon where they would die and be buried.[194] Thus both good and false prophets had their roles to play. The first were chosen by God, and the second were tolerated by him, but both accomplished missions as priests, rulers, prophets, and in several cases, as scourges.

Sometimes the divine call manifested itself in ways, subtle or indirect, other than by dreams, visions, and prophecies. So did the necessary inner assurance[195] come to the divinely chosen agent in some mysterious unobtrusive manner. At times the call and its confirmation were expressed through the medium of God's messengers or angels. Such had been the case once with Abraham. Thus, God had promised the patriarch that his name would be great, that he would become a great people, that he would be blessed and be himself a source of blessing to others.[196] Similarly, Moses[197] and David[198] had been appointed and confirmed by God to be his ministers and the executors of his will. In the same way, Cyrus, God's shepherd,[199] had

---

191. God used them to punish sin by sin: see G.V., Ezek. 14:9, n. (f).

192. See Ezek. 13:3. See also Deut. 18:20.

193. See Ezek. 14:9.

194. See Jer. 20:6.

195. The G.V. annotator puts the following words on the lips of Jeremiah: "I am assured of my vocation, and therefore, knowe that the thing which thou speakest by me, shal come to passe, and that I speake not of any worldelie affection": G.V., Jer. 17:16, n. (p).

196. See Gen. 12:2.

197. For Moses as a prophet and a minister of God, see G.V., Num. 4:37, n. (s).

198. "I chose David to be ruler over my people of Israel": 1 Kgs. 8:16.

199. God "saith to Cyrus, Thou art my shepherd": G.V., Isa. 44:28.

been inspired[200] and "taken from the ends of the earth"[201] to carry out God's instructions with regard to the liberation of Israel and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. All of these Biblical leaders had emerged from a humble and obscure background as shepherds and had acceded to great heights of power and glory. At other times, the divine mission and the confirmation thereof revealed itself through profound stirrings of the soul, as a deep moving of the spirit. Thus David had been moved to face Goliath and defeat him[202] in spite of great odds. Later, he was led to name Solomon as his successor[203] for "God had ordeined him to be the King ouer Israel".[204] On various occasions, God had stirred kings who should destroy idolaters[205] or tyrants used to punish others.[206] Cyrus had been moved in this way.[207] So could wicked agents be moved in the same manner if these were needed to accomplish a specific purpose. This had been the case with Saul,[208] with Phul, king of Assyria,[209] and with others. In all these instances, God's

---

200. "I did cal hym, and bryng hym foorth": B.V., Isa. 48:15. So did God speak of David. "I called thee euen from among the glorious menne" of the earth: see B.V., Isa. 41:9.

201. G.V., Isa. 41:9.

202. "For he ... was also moued by Gods spirite to take that enterprise agaynst Goliath": B.V., 1 Sam. 17:29, n. (k).

203. David had been "moued by the Spirit of God so to do, because he foresawe that Solomon shulde be the figure of Christ": G.V., 1 Kgs. 1:30, n. (n).

204. G.V., Prov. 31:1, n. (a).

205. "The Lord shal stir him up a King ouer Israel, which shal destroy the house of Ieroboam ...": G.V., 1 Kgs. 14:14. The Scofield edition of the Bible has "raise" instead of "stir": See C. I. Scofield, ed., Holy Bible: Authorized King James Version (New York, 1967).

206. See G.V., 1 Kgs. 15:29, n. (k).

207. "And ... the Lord stirred vp the spirit of Cyrus King of Persia": G.V., 2 Chr. 36:22. The word "stirred" is explained as "moued him, and gaue him heart": see G.V., Ezra 1:1, n. (c).

208. "Saul (thogh not approued of God) was made King": G.V.; 1 Sam. 9:3, n. (c).

209. See 1 Chr. 5:26.

free and arbitrary election of his agents alone sanctioned their role and function.[210] The chosen one was even considered to be an annointed of God,[211] especially "ordained by heaven"[212] to fulfil the divinely-assigned mission entrusted to him. The mission of the prophet did not always exclude that of the scourge.

The question which arises by now is how do these considerations apply to Tamburlaine. After Tamburlaine has been introduced in the prologue as "scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword" (1T Pro. 6) and referred to in the play as "that sturdie Scythian thiefe" (1T 1.1.36) who daily commits incivill outrages" (1T 1.1.40), preying upon travellers (1T 1.1.32) and robbing merchants (1T 1.1.37) being his principal misdeeds, almost in the same breath, Tamburlaine's ambitions are alluded to: Tamburlaine is "hoping (misled by dreaming prophesies) / To raigne in Asia" (1T 1.1.41-42) eventually. The reaction of Mycetes, the king of Persia, and of Meander, one of the Persian lords, to these rumours about Tamburlaine's wild dreams is quite normal. To them, Tamburlaine cannot appear other than grievously misled if he thinks he might someday rule the East. On the other hand, how should one interpret the expression "dreaming prophesies"?

Before Tamburlaine has even crossed the threshold of the stage, these words, that is, "dreaming prophesies" already set him apart on a level other and above that of ordinary humans, in a spiritual or moral world with its own rules dictated by dreams and prophecies. For, by these words, the audience learns that Tamburlaine has dreams, neither of the ordinary sort nor of the kind akin to day-dreams, but prophetic in nature. Who can set limits to the power in store for one who dreams his future prophetically, who draws guidance, strength, and inspiration from such sources?

---

210. God's choices were free and arbitrary as had been the choice of Israel as his chosen people: see G.V., 2 Sam. 7:24, n. (m).

211. See Isa. 45:1. "Because Cyrus shulde execute the office of a deliuerer, God called him his anointed for a time": G.V., Isa. 45:1, n. (b). See also G.V., 2 Chr. 36:23, n. (n); Isa. 61:1.

212. God had ordained Israel to be his people forever: see B.V., G.V., 2 Sam. 7:24. The word "ordained", meaning "appointed", was frequently

cont'd./

One wonders what effect the whole phrase "dreaming prophesies" might have had on an Elizabethan audience. From what has been said before,[213] it is obvious that the words could not fail to be rich in overtones for the Elizabethans familiar with the Biblical lore about prophets and prophecies. By combining these two words, the dramatist, with typical Marlovian conciseness, conjures up the double connotations of dreams and prophecies and places the hero within the controversial issues related to good and bad prophets. Marlowe thus suggests another note of ambiguity to the character of Tamburlaine. One wonders what and how many of these notions connected with this Biblical lore would come to the mind of the listener upon hearing this description of Tamburlaine. Judging from the frequency with which names like Joseph, Moses, David, Joshua, and others, occurred in the literature of the period, one might affirm with some assurance that these words were bound to evoke thelong line of prophets and heroes who paced their way to power and fame throughout the pages of the history of Israel. Their gigantic careers, inspired and instructed through the medium of dreams, prophecies, or both, remained inexplicable by human standards, and yet, their place and importance in history, religious and political, was beyond question. Mental associations of this kind evoked by the expression, probably from the very start, injected into the play inferences which were bound to suggest the moral image, and perhaps the physical one as well, of the hero. By these associations, Tamburlaine was made to transcend the normal course of human existence. Though a man, he was supposedly in touch with the powers divine, set apart to walk the earth in the company, if not of the gods, at least of the greatest of the heroes of humanity. Tamburlaine was destined to transcend

---

Footnote No. 212 cont'd./

used in the sixteenth-century editions of the Bible, whereas the Scofield edition uses "confirmed" instead.
B.V., G.V., 1 Kgs. 2:24; Jer. 1:5; B.V., Jer. 29:26; B.V., G.V., Acts 22:14; etc.

213. See above, pp. 476 ff.

the limitations set by the contingencies of an ordinary human existence and rise into the category of beings too great to be restricted within the confines of this earth. The expression opened up Tamburlaine's dramatic space into the infinite halls of the spiritual realms. Thus these words determined to a large extent the scope of the hero and led the audience to anticipate in Tamburlaine's career definite characteristics and patterns of behaviour generally connected with people led by this kind of special and unusual calling. Even though God is not expressly linked with Tamburlaine's "dreaming prophesies", the anticipated role of God in the life of a scourge and in the life of Tamburlaine in this role, could somewhat already set the divine hallmark on Tamburlaine's prophecies and establish points of similarity between the Scythian and some of the Biblical characters chosen and led by God. To some extent, the Elizabethan could have sensed the kind of person whom they might expect to appear on the stage, the traits which would distinguish him from the other characters in the play.

As the Elizabethans had rightly guessed, instead of the lame hero of the histories and chronicles, Marlowe brought forth on the stage a stately Tamburlaine, a godly[214] figure of strength, beauty, and majesty, a character whose spiritual and physical assets literally dwarfed his stage colleagues into quasi-insignificance. By his mission and physical appearance, Tamburlaine was virtually promoted into the ranks of Biblical men like Joseph, also guided by prophetic dreams, like Moses, David and others, all of them great leaders chosen and led by God. Tamburlaine could be akin to these Biblical counterparts and consequently must be endowed with a physique

---

214. "For be ye sure that the Lord hathe chosen to him self a godlie man": G.V., Ps. 4:3. See also B.V., Ps. 4:3. The expression "godlie man" is explained as follows: "A king that walketh in his vocation": G.V., Ps. 4:3, n. (f). Whether the word "godlie" is used to describe the physical appearance or the fidelity to one's own vocation, the term could apply to Tamburlaine. In a vision of the elect, Esdras sees Christ described as follows: "And in the middest of them, there was a young man of a hygh stature, more excellent then al they, and vpon euery one of their heads he set crownes and was euer higher and hygher": B.V., 4 Esdras 2:43. The description could apply to Tamburlaine.

to match his role. For, by Biblical standards, that physical appearance should correspond somewhat to the office held was an important concept. Saul, destined to rule, had been of fair countenance,[215] of stature "hier then anie of the people",[216] so that "it might seme that God approued their [Israel's] request in appointing out suche a persone."[217] David had been "of an excellent beautie and well-fauoured in syght",[218] of "a good countinance and comelie visage",[219] "strong and valiant",[220] "prudent in dooyng of feates and wel made",[221] "wise in matters, and a comely persone".[222] Absalom's beauty had been unsurpassed in Israel;[223] so had Solomon been favoured in this respect.[224] Thus God seemed to foster the myth that important and high positions of responsibility or outstanding careers should be entrusted to individuals endowed with a physique to match, with a stately build and a pleasant appearance.[225] Consequently, one may assume that Marlowe would keep this in mind while creating the character of the great Tamburlaine in order that his hero might answer to the expectations of his

---

215. See B.V., G.V., 1 Sam. 9:2.

216. G.V., 1 Sam. 9:2.

217. G.V., 1 Sam. 9:2, n. (b).

218. B.V., 1 Sam. 16:12.

219. G.V., 1 Sam. 16:12.

220. B.V., 1 Sam. 16:18.

221. B.V., 1 Sam. 16:18.

222. G.V., 1 Sam. 16:18.

223. 2 Sam. 14:25.

224. Solomon was described as "fairer than the children of men": G.V., Ps. 45:2. Solomon had been blessed with "beautie and eloquence to winne fauour with his people": G.V., Ps. 45:2, n. (c).

225. Knolles also adhered to this myth. For comments on the appearance of Baldwin, see op. cit., n. 44, p. 27; of Andronicus, see ibid., p. 54. etc.

contemporaries. As may be anticipated, Tamburlaine towers above the rest of the stage characters. The power and majesty which emanates from his being hold his stage colleagues and audiences spellbound from the first moment of his appearance. All his Egyptian captives, including Zenocrate, one of those Egyptians full of utter disdain for all nations other than their own and of contempt for all herdsmen[226] and shepherds,[227] are subdued within minutes after first casting eyes on this Scythian. Theridamas is stunned with admiration at the sight of this "Scythian shepheard, so imbellished / with Natures pride, and richest furniture" (1T 1.2.155-156). However, should the audience have missed the point about the godliness the dramatist meant Tamburlaine to have, by including Menaphon's detailed and lengthy description of the hero (1T 2.1.7-30), Marlowe takes pains to convince his listeners that Tamburlaine's physique is meant to suggest divine power and majesty. Only in terms of gods and giants can Tamburlaine, who "In every part proportioned like the man / Should make the world subdued to Tamburlaine" (1T 2.1.29-30),[228] be adequately described by Menaphon.

If "dreaming prophesies" set Tamburlaine among prophets or God's specially chosen agents, then he would likely display certain almost conventional Biblical characteristics associated with such as were destined to fulfil divine missions. Divine calls of this nature were usually accompanied by a radical change of heart.[229] No one will deny that Tamburlaine's dramatic

---

226. See B.V., Gen. 46:34.

227. Tamburlaine asks the following question when he first tries to win Zenocrate: "Disdaines Zenocrate to live with me?" (1T 1.2.82). This is already the second reference in the play about the disdain which Tamburlaine, the rising shepherd, inspires in his contemporaries. For Theridamas's feelings with regard to Tamburlaine, see 1T 1.1.63. That Zenocrate should show disdain for Tamburlaine is typical of the Egyptian's attitude towards the shepherds of Israel. To the Egyptian, "euerie shepekeper [was] an abominacion: see G.V., Gen. 46:34.

228. Ideas of excellence were assumed to be of God, or godly: see G.V., 1 Chr. 12:22, n. (h).

229. See G.V., 1 Sam. 10:9, n. (d).

shedding of his shepherd's weeds to disclose the full regalia of a warrior's armoured suit[230] could symbolize in no better way Tamburlaine's radical change of vocation from the simple carefree life of a nomadic shepherd to that of dedicated warfare. This dramatic gesture on the part of the hero could evoke several Biblical counterparts who had experienced with success the transfer from an obscure and humble pastoral way of life to the clatter of the battlefields and the pressures of a public life and career. This had been the story of the many shepherd-warriors of the Bible, of leaders like Abraham,[231] Moses,[232] Joshua,[233] Saul,[234] and David,[235] the greatest of them all. For some of these, the change to a new vocation had been symbolized by a change of name[236] which could be God's seal confirming the promises made to his elect,[237] as was the case with Abraham[238]

---

230. See 1T 1.2.41 ff. Judas Maccabeus dresses as a warrior: "He put on a breast plate as a giant, and arayed hym selfe with his harnesse, and defended the host with his swoord": B.V., 1 Macc. 3:3. Dramatic changes of garment occur also elsewhere in the Bible: see Zech. 3:4.

231. In connection with his attacks on the neighbouring idolatrous kings, it is said that Abraham "tooke not this warre in hand as a priuate man: but by special vocation": B.V., Gen. 14:14, n. (k).

232. "Moses kept the shepe of Iethro his father in law": G.V., Exod. 3:1. God called Moses from his flocks for the purpose of freeing Israel from the Egyptian bondage.

233. Joshua is also a shepherd divinely chosen to lead the people of Israel: see Num. 27:18. He is entrusted with the military and political leadership of that people by special appointment on the part of God. In order that he may fulfil that mission adequately, he is invested of his Spirit and his principal function is to carry out war on behalf of God's people, to conquer lands, and to destroy idolatry. Under the guidance of this shepherd-warrior, Israel becomes a warring nation by vocation. There are several points of similarity between Joshua's mission and that of Tamburlaine.

234. See 1 Sam. 10:6.

235. God "of a poore shepherd hathe made me a valiant warriour and mightie conquerour": G.V., Ps. 144:1, n. (a). See also 1 Sam. 16:1; 17:14, 15, 34; 2 Sam. 7:8; etc.

236. "Thou shalt be called by a new name": Isa. 62:2.

237. See G.V., Gen. 17:5, n. (b).

238. See Gen. 17:5.

and Jacob,[239] or by a change of garment which identified the elect with his new office or function, as had been the case with Aaron.[240] The change of vesture, symbol of the rapid and complete transformation of an individual or even of a social context,[241] was a recurring Biblical theme with which Marlowe's contemporaries were quite familiar. Thus, the hero's change of weeds symbolized Tamburlaine's shift in attention from small-scale pillaging to systematic pursuits in warfare. These were to lead him to the summit of power.

Tamburlaine's associations with prophecies probably singled him out as an elect of the heavenly powers. As a result, the audience would expect him to be "ordain'd by heaven" (1T 2.1.52) for the realization of great deeds, as his Biblical predecessors had been. Similarly, he would be a cause of blessings for his associates[242] as Abraham[243] and others[244] had been for their colleagues. Furthermore, the audience would not be surprised to hear about "figures of renowne and myracle" (1T 2.1.4.) borne on the forehead of Tamburlaine's fortune (1T 2.1.3-4). This image used by Cosroe

---

239. See Gen. 32:28.

240. See Exod. 28:3 and G.V., Exod. 28:3, n. (b). See also B.V., G.V., Ecclus. 45:7. In Isaiah, we find the following: "Thou hast clothyng: thou shalbe our head": B.V., Isa. 3:6. The G.V. uses "prince" instead of "head": see ibid.

241. The Psalmist speaks of successive disappearing generations in these words: "like a vesture shalt thou change them and they shall be changed": Ps. 102:26. The same idea reappears in the epistle to the Hebrews: "And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same": Heb. 1:12. In both instances, the image is used as a contrast to God's unchangeable nature.

242. Tamburlaine promises that the "Fates and Oracles of heaven have sworne / ... / [to] make them blest that share in his attemptes": 1T 2.3.7, 9.

243. See Gen. 12:2.

244. "The Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake": Gen. 39:5. The G.V. says of David that the Lord has made him God's blessings to others and a perpetual example of his favour for ever: see G.V., Ps. 21:6, n. (d).

was both Biblical[245] and Moslem.[246] In addition to this, Elizabethans could expect the hero to be divinely protected. God, or Jove in this case, would extend his right hand from heaven to shield him from any harm (1T 1.2.180-181) as he had done for David[247] principally. Tamburlaine would live his career of warfare unscathed.[248] Biblical references to this kind of divine protection enjoyed by God's elects were very numerous. Over and above all, prophetic associations with Tamburlaine were a guarantee that his words could be expected to become reality, to be as sure as oracles.[249] Consequently, the hero's associates are soon aware that Tamburlaine's utterances are "woorking woordes" (1T 2.3.25) and that "his

---

245. The image is probably inspired by Biblical texts. The signs of the high-priest's office were to be always worn on his forehead: see Exod. 28:38. In a vision, the Lord had ordered Ezekiel to set a mark on the forehead of those that deplored the abominations in their midst: see Ezek. 9:4. The image is used especially in the Book of Revelation. God was to seal his servants in this way: see Rev. 7:3. See also Rev. 9:4; 13:16; 14:1, 9; 22:4; etc.

246. Knolles quotes this Turkish saying in his Historie: "What is by God written in a mans forehead before his birth, cannot in his life be auoided": op. cit., n. 44, p. 238. Similar remarks occur frequently.

247. There are many references to the protection which God gives to his elect. They are sheltered by his right hand or by his shield. God is a shield against harm: see 2 Sam. 22:3, 36; Ps. 18:30, 35; 28:7; 84:9, 11; G.V. Prov. 2:7; B.V., G.V., Prov. 30:5. God will compass his elect about "as with a shield": see Ps. 5:12. God protects his own by his right hand against the fury of their enemies: see Ps. 18:35; 63:8; 108:6; 138:7; 139:10; Ecclus. 51:2; Wisd. 5:17; 19:8; etc.

248. God protects his own from all dangers: see G.V., Ps. 18:30, n. (y); G.V., Ps. 18:35, n. (b); G.V., Ps. 5:12, n. (i); G.V., Ps. 91:5, n. (e). This is especially true on the battlefield: see Ps. 91:7; Ezra 8:31; G.V., Ezra 8:31, n. (k). This protection is even more assured if the elect is faithful to his vocation: see G.V., John 11:9, n. (b). See also G.V., 2 Sam. 22:5, n. (c); 1 Chr. 18:6, 13; etc.

249. See above p. 177. Execution was prompt as the following words suggest: "As soone as thy woorde went foorth, the woorke was made": B.V., 4 Esdras 6:43. The annotator explains: "By oracles is ment the sayings that God spake to Moses": G.V., Acts 7:38, n. (p).

actions top his speech." (1T 2.3.26). Cosroe considers Tamburlaine's judgments as oracles (1T 2.3.4-5). His speeches about his future campaigns and victories carry a certainty of success as great as that assured by the "Oracles of heaven" (1T 2.3.7 ff.)[250] or the decrees of the divine "will" and "shall" which the hero makes his own (1T 3.3.41).[251] Tamburlaine's words have a prophetic quality; they come true. In contrast to this, similar plans expounded by his enemies turn out to be mere empty brags.[252] Finally, Tamburlaine would be expected by the audience to meet with the timely gifts or opportunities which would enable him to carry out his plans.[253] Consequently, Tamburlaine is endowed with a rare degree of eloquence[254] and an unfailing power of persuasion, both gifts highly esteemed in the Bible.[255] The necessary funds for his campaigns come to him

---

250. See also 1T 1.2.212-213.

251. "Will" and "Shall" suggest God's ways of realizing his plans. His wishes are inevitably carried out into action. See Scofield, ed. cit., n. 205, p. 5, n. 1.

252. This was another characteristic proper to the enemies of Israel or to God's enemies in general for "the wicked bragge of theyr power, as Pilate did": B.V., Gen. 31:29, n. (n). The idea is present in the play: see 1T 3.3.3. The wicked "brag in their talke": G.V., Ps. 59:7. For the "proud brags" of the Moabites, see G.V., Isa. 16:6, n. (f), andsee also G.V., Mic. 4:12, n. (m).

253. The Bible annotator declares the following on the subject: "God maketh them mete and assureth them whome he calleth to set forthe his glorie, giuing them all the meanes necessarie for the same": G.V., Jer. 1:9, n. (k). Even wonders and miracles accompanied the elect if those were necessary to convince himself and others of the truth of his message: see above, p. 478. For Christ as a prophet, see G.V., Acts 1:1, n. (a); Acts 2:22; etc.

254. Marlowe undoubtedly wishes the audience to take notice of Tamburlaine's eloquence. The hero's power with words is compared to that of Hermes (see 1T 1.2.210-211), to Apollo's oracles (see 1T 1.2.213), and is in striking contrast to that of Mycetes. Mycetes must ask Cosroe to be his spokesman (see 1T 1.1.2-3, 124), or Meander (see 1T 1.1.28-29; 2.2.13). As a result, Cosroe has but contempt for his inarticulate brother: see 1T 1.1.19-20, 92, 95-96. So has Tamburlaine: see 1T 2.4.23, 25.

255. Moses failed to see how he could lead Israel because he was not "a man eloquent": see B.V., Exod. 4:10. The gift of eloquence is associated with Sennacherib, the Scourge of God: see B.V., G.V., 2 Kgs. 18:20. Solomon was blessed with "beautie and eloquence... to ouercome his enemies": see G.V., Ps. 45:2, n. (c).

unsolicited.[256] Indeed, the Elizabethans were probably hardly surprised at Marlowe's invention, at his directing an Egyptian princess to Tamburlaine to become his future wife and queen. Joseph,[257] Solomon,[258] the scourge Hadad[259] and Alexander,[260] all had married into Egyptian aristocracy as they pursued the vocation assigned to them by God. Perhaps Marlowe's audiences were even less astonished to recognize or detect in Zenocrate's tearful pleas begging Tamburlaine to save her people echoes of Esther's similar and more successful demands or requests[261] made to Ahasuerus[262] or Xerxes. In both cases, the pleas occurred in a banquet setting contrasted against the impending gloom of massive slaughter.

---

256. See 1T 1.2.182-183. Robbing the Egyptians to meet one's own needs occurs more than once in the Bible. Israel, under the leadership of Moses, despoil the Egyptians of their jewels of silver and gold before they leave Egypt on their journey to Sinai: see Exod. 12:35, 36. So did Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, take the spoil of Egypt and use it as wages for his army: see Ezek. 29:19. Tamburlaine puts the jewels and treasures taken from Zenocrate and her train to a similar use: see 1T 1.2.183.

257. Joseph marries the daughter of Potipherah, the priest of On. The word "priest" is glossed as "prince": see G.V., Gen. 41:45 and gloss.

258. See 1 Kgs. 3:1 and 7:8. See also 2 Chr. 8:11. It may be pointed out that Pharaoh, the father of Solomon's wife, took the city of Gazer, burnt it and slew all its inhabitants, and then presented it to his daughter as a present: see 1 Kgs. 9:16. This situation is not very far removed from that of Zenocrate being crowned and wedded to Tamburlaine after the city of Damascus has been totally destroyed and its people mercilessly slaughtered: see 1T 5.1.120-134, 506-509, 533-534.

259. See 1 Kgs. 11:19. Hadad was stirred by the Lord to scourge Solomon and his people: see 1 Kgs. 11:17.

260. Alexander the Great asked Ptolemeus of Egypt to marry his daughter Cleopatra so that he could be his son-in-law and give Ptolemeus and his daughter rewards according to their dignity: see 1 Macc. 10:51 ff. Is Tamburlaine meant to imitate Alexander in this way?

261. See Esther 8.

262. Ahasuerus was also called Darius. Some think he was Darius Hystaspis, also called Artaxerxes: see G.V., Esther 1:1, n. (a). Scofield, in an introductory note to the Book of Esther, identifies Ahasuerus as Xerxes who reigned from 486-465 B.C.: see ed. cit., n. 205, 562.

Biblical elects of God were noted for the happiness they experienced and displayed in accomplishing their mission.[263] In this respect as well, Tamburlaine and his men are faithful to their models. This is especially true in the first part of the play. In spite of the dreary context of war and bloodshed which accompanies them everywhere they go, they profess themselves to be glad[264] and happy.[265] For some reason, these allusions to happiness disappear in the second part of the play. Possibly, as death invades Tamburlaine's personal life in the person of Zenocrate and elements of failure symbolized by Calyphas betray flaws in Tamburlaine's nature, overt expressions of happiness become incompatible with the atmosphere of the play. As Tamburlaine pursues his scourging mission, the play becomes more and more depressing and heavy with the gloom of death and destruction.

In spite of the dark side of Tamburlaine's nature, his treatment of his colleagues always seems to be fair. Although he is unremittingly and relentlessly cruel towards his enemies and captives, his dealings with his associates suggest habits and attitudes of fair treatment. Each may expect rewards according to his merits (1T 1.2.255). This was a rule in keeping with the standards of justice and fair play set by the Bible. Frequent allusions remind the reader of this norm observed by God in dealing with his people.[266] The godly Tamburlaine would at least make some

---

263. Fair rewards were the basis of the happiness experienced by the servants of God: see B.V., Deut. 4:40, n. (p). See also Deut. 16:15, 33:29. The greater number of Biblical allusions to happiness occur in connection with David and his followers. They repeatedly described themselves as glad and happy: see 1 Kgs. 8:66; 10:8; 1 Chr. 16:27; Ps. 21:6; 64:10; 92:4; 105:43; 106:5; 128:2; etc. The same applies to Solomon and his followers (see 2 Chr. 9;7), to Jehosaphat and his men (see 2 Chr. 20:27); etc. See also B.V., G.V., Isa. 51:11.

264. See 1T 1.2.250; 2T 1.3.136.

265. See 1T 1.2.257; 2.5.46; 3.3.272; 4.4.85, 121; etc.

266. "God promiseth reward to men not for that they deserue it, but to make them cheareful in wel doeyng, and to shewe that they shal not seruo hym in vayne": B.V. Deut. 4:40, n. (p). Elsewhere occurs the idea that God will reward every man according to his ways, and according to the fruits of his works: B.V., G.V., Jer. 17:10. See also Rom. 2:6; 1 Cor. 3:8. See also G.V., Ps. 28:4; B.V., Ps. 62:11, T.H. (B.V., C.P.V., and G.V., Ps. 62:12); B.V., G.V., Prov. 24:29; Jer. 25:14; 32:19; Ezek. 7:4.

pretence of observing the same.

The pattern of Tamburlaine's career resembles that of many Biblical heroes. As was the case for several of these Biblical characters, Tamburlaine climbs gradually from the status of an obscure shepherd to that of the king of Persia. Each successive victory adds to the size of his army and conquered territory.[267] Like his Biblical counterparts, Tamburlaine seeks assurance and self-confidence from the same sources and means. In the course of this ascent to power, Tamburlaine seems to undergo an occasional feeling of uncertainty about the outcome of his pursuits and to experience the need of some sign which would confirm the validity of his initiatives. As his Biblical predecessors did before him, he looks to success as a proof and sign of his call.[268] At a time when he is thinking of turning his armies against those of his former colleague and leader, he

---

267. Rapid growth was a sign of God's blessing. This had been true of Isaac who "waxed myghtie, and went foorth, and grewe tyl he was exceedyng great": B.V., Gen. 26:13. It was also true of Israel as a people: see B.V., G.V., Gen. 46:3; 47:27. "It was of Gods special grace, that in fewe yeares so smal a number grewe to sucho a multitude ...": B.V., Gen. 46:27, n. (k). See also Dout. 1:10 and G.V., Deut. 1:10, n. (h); Deut. 7:22; 26:5; 2 Sam. 5:10. David's forces grew gradually like Tamburlaine's "for at that time there came one or other to Dauid day by day to helpe hym, vntyl it was a great host, lyke the host of God": B.V., 1 Chr. 12:22; Ps. 105:24; B.V., Hag. 1:6, n. (d); G.V., Jer. 33:5, n. (e); etc. Cf. Meander's disparaging words on the subject: 1T 2.2.20 ff.

268. Success was a proof of the Lord's approval for "God giueth good successe to all things that are vndertaken for the glorie of his Name and according to his worde": G.V., Gen. 24:15, n. (h). "The Lord was with Ioseph, and he was a man that prospered...": G.V., Gen. 39:2. "For whatsoeuer he did, the Lord made it to prosper": G.V., Gen. 39:23. The Bible annotator explains that "men are neuer luckey in deede, but when God is with them": B.V., Gen. 39:2, n. (a). For "the fauour of God is the founteine of all prosperitie": G.V., Gen. 39:2, n. (b). "Nothyng vpon earth can prosper, vnlesse God by his heauenly blessing encrease it, and conserue it": B.V., Deut. 28:12, n. (b). "Nothing in the earth is profitable, but when God sendeth his blessings from heauen": G.V., Deut. 28:12, n. (i). David "prospered in al that he tooke in hand": B.V., 1 Sam. 16:13, n. (h). See also 2 Sam. 5:10; 1 Chr. 11:9; B.V., 1 Chr. 22:11 and n. (e); Ps. 1:3; G.V., Ps. 18:32, n. (z); etc.

admits feeling "strongly moov'd (1T 2.5.75), mysteriously urged to march against Cosroe. The confirmation of his calling seems to hang on the success of this campaign for, says he, "if I prosper, all shall be as sure" (1T 2.5.84) as if all his enemies yielded themselves up to him (1T 2.5.85). This unexplained intuition about the importance of this campaign and its success being a guarantee of divine approval, both thoughts which seem to be uppermost in Tamburlaine's mind at this time, are present in the Bible. In many instances, victories and success in various initiatives are seen as the seal of divine help and approval. Prophetic stirrings of the soul sent for the purpose of guiding the elect and success as the sign of God's blessing on an enterprise, were both Biblical elements from which God's warriors drew strength again and again.

Finally, Tamburlaine is faced with the prospects of challenging the mighty Bajazet. Theridamas feels confident that the venture will be successful for all of Tamburlaine's plans have met with success. Surely, "Even he that in a trice vanquisht two kings" (1T 3.3.36), Mycetes and Cosroe, will defeat the Turk. Did Theridamas's allusions to the defeat of these "two kings" convey no more than its literal meaning to Marlowe's audience? The Bible alludes repeatedly to the important defeat of two kings, Sehon of the Amorites and Og of Basan,[269] by Moses. These two victories had marked a decisive turning point in the history of Israel. For the first time, Israel had been able to consolidate itself as a nation and establish its code of laws. By these two victories, Israel had become strong enough to withstand the constant threat of the invasive idolatrous forces of the neighbouring tribes.

---

269. For allusions to these two kings, see Deut. 1:4; 3:21; 4:47; 29:7; 31:4; Josh. 2:10; B.V., Josh. 5:1, n. (a); Josh. 9:10; Ps. 135:11; etc. For allusions to one or the other king, see Deut. 2:24; 3:2; Ps. 136:19, 20; etc. Other pairs of defeated kings are alluded to elsewhere: see Judges 8:2; B.V., Judges 8:2, n. (a); Judges 8:3, 7, 12; 2 Kgs. 10:4; etc.

From all that has been said, it is little surprising to hear Tamburlaine proclaim in the second part of the play that he will pursue his campaigns as the Scourge of God "til by vision, or by speach I heare / Immortall Jove say, Cease my Tamburlaine" (2T 4.1.198-199). And indeed, he does pursue his campaigns until his strength fails completely. The whole of Tamburlaine's career bears the mark of prophetic guidance. The hero's mission seems to be assigned and guided by God. Techelles sums up this aspect of Tamburlaine's nature when he says of him at the end of the play that "his birth, life, health and majesty / Were strangely blest and governed by heaven" (2T 5.3.25-26). As the Biblical author had said of Solomon,[270] never again should heaven and earth produce another like him.

However, the above considerations are only half of the explanation of Tamburlaine's prophetic entity, for the typically Marlovian expression "mislod by dreaming prophesies" is replete with ambiguities. The first of these arises from the presence of the word "misled". It has been pointed out above that this word may simply express a subjective reaction and assessment of Tamburlaine's wild plans of empery on the part of the disturbed Persian court. To Mycetes and Meander, even though the kingdom is in a sad state of confusion, Tamburlaine's ambitions can appear to be no more than foolish fancies. The use of that word would not necessarily destroy the prophetic character of Tamburlaine's dreams. Tamburlaine's "dreaming prophesies" could still be of divine origin as god-sent stirrings of the mind and soul for the purpose of instigating Tamburlaine towards the execution of a providential plan. However, the word "misled" can easily cast the odium attached to false prophets onto the dreamer of these "dreaming prophesies". This would not necessarily cancel all that has been said above about the prophetic quality of Tamburlaine, for such prophets, even

---

270. For the fame of Solomon, see 1 Chr. 29: 25. For the fame of other great leaders like Hezekiah, see 2 Kgs. 18:5; like Josias, see 2 Kgs. 23. For the fame of Judas Maccabeus, see B.V., G.V. 1 Macc. 3:9.

From all that has been said, it is little surprising to hear Tamburlaine proclaim in the second part of the play that he will pursue his campaigns as the Scourge of God "til by vision, or by speach I heare / Immortall Jove say, Cease my Tamburlaine" (2T 4.1.198-199). And indeed, he does pursue his campaigns until his strength fails completely. The whole of Tamburlaine's career bears the mark of prophetic guidance. The hero's mission seems to be assigned and guided by God. Techelles sums up this aspect of Tamburlaine's nature when he says of him at the end of the play that "his birth, life, health and majesty / Were strangely blest and governed by heaven" (2T 5.3.25-26). As the Biblical author had said of Solomon,[270] never again should heaven and earth produce another like him.

However, the above considerations are only half of the explanation of Tamburlaine's prophetic entity, for the typically Marlovian expression "misled by dreaming prophesies" is replete with ambiguities. The first of these arises from the presence of the word "misled". It has been pointed out above that this word may simply express a subjective reaction and assessment of Tamburlaine's wild plans of empery on the part of the disturbed Persian court. To Mycetes and Meander, even though the kingdom is in a sad state of confusion, Tamburlaine's ambitions can appear to be no more than foolish fancies. The use of that word would not necessarily destroy the prophetic character of Tamburlaine's dreams. Tamburlaine's "dreaming prophesies" could still be of divine origin as god-sent stirrings of the mind and soul for the purpose of instigating Tamburlaine towards the execution of a providential plan. However, the word "misled" can easily cast the odium attached to false prophets onto the dreamer of these "dreaming prophesies". This would not necessarily cancel all that has been said above about the prophetic quality of Tamburlaine, for such prophets, even

---

270. For the fame of Solomon, see 1 Chr. 29: 25. For the fame of other great leaders like Hezekiah, see 2 Kgs. 18:5; like Josias, see 2 Kgs. 23. For the fame of Judas Maccabeus, see B.V., G.V. 1 Macc. 3:9.

though they might have been deluded by their dreams, had their place in the divine plan of history. Nevertheless, if Tamburlaine is a false prophet, then the degree of his perversity could depend on the interpretation of the words "dreaming prophesies".

Hitherto, the two words have been assumed to be interchangeable in place and function. By allowing a purely adjectival value to the word "dreaming", the two words can be read as "dreaming prophesies" or as "prophetic dreams" without tampering with the meaning to any degree. However, if the word "dreaming" is given the value of an on-going action, the expression "dreaming prophesies" becomes the equivalent of "dreaming up prophecies" or, worse yet, "dreaming his own prophecies". In this perspective, Tamburlaine becomes of the worst of false prophets, having nothing to do with divine election or guidance. This would mean that he is carrying out his mission as a scourge absolutely on his own terms. At most, can he be a tool used by God for the time being until the day comes when he is of no use and is rejected as an agent foreign to the heavenly regions when he has fulfilled God's purpose. Tamburlaine's prophetic dreams can be no more than products of his own imagination, purely of his own making. As was mentioned before,[271] to believe one's own dreams, to suppose them to be coming from God and to act upon them is to be in the realm of lies and deceit, or to be an agent of Satan. Is there any evidence in the play which could support the idea of Tamburlaine playing the role of a false prophet under the power of Satan or the devil?

False prophets in the Bible were described as thieves and robbers, ravenous wolves dressed in sheep's clothing who would be known by their fruits. Is it by sheer coincidence that, in the very next scene after he has been described as "misled by dreaming prophesies", Tamburlaine is made to appear on the stage as a thief, dressed as a shepherd, a garb not far removed from "sheep's clothing", gloating over the jewels and treasures

---

271. See above pp. 476 ff.

he has just looted from the Egyptian train (1T 1.2.1-10)? Is it also by sheer coincidence that the first two significantly long speeches made by Tamburlaine to Zenocrate (1T 1.2.82-105) and Theridamas (1T 1.2.166-209) are a tissue of flatteries, of promises of plenty, of alluringly pleasant tales, of instigations to rebellion against the legitimate authority, all of which are the distinctive fruits of a perverse false prophet? The speech made to Theridamas is the most impressive of the two and merits a few moments of attention.

Tamburlaine begins immediately by flattering Theridamas. Like himself who "beares figures of renowne and myracle" (1T 2.1.4) in "the forhead of his fortune" (1T 2.1.3), Theridamas "by Characters graven" (1T 1.2.169) on his brow and by his general martial appearance (1T 1.2.170) deserves to lead not only a thousand horse but a host. Tamburlaine goes on to impress his guest with tales of divine protection and favours showered upon himself and, thereby, to arouse Theridamas's pride in being associated with a great and unusual leader like himself. Tamburlaine lures Theridamas into his wake by promises of spoil, power, and fame to be had as his partner in war and rule.[272] By inducing him to turn against his king Mycetes, the legitimate ruler of Persia, Tamburlaine instigates Theridamas to betray his legitimate authority. Tamburlaine's methods and power of persuasion displayed in this scene have been qualified as worthy of no less than Satan, the angel of light. Logically, the climax to Tamburlaine's pursuits and, therefore, to Theridamas's as well, is no more than "the sweet fruition of an earthly crowne" (1T 2.7.29), the most that can be hoped for in Satan's realm as opposed to the heavenly crown promised to the servants of God.[273]

---

272. Similar methods of persuasion are found in the Bible: see B.V., G.V., 1 Macc. 10:24.

273. See 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4; 1 Cor. 9:25; B.V., G.V., Ps. 21:3; G.V., Gal. 5:5, n. (b); etc.

The significance of this line has been analysed elsewhere.[274]

Finally, as a false prophet associated with the Biblical notions about such characters, and in keeping with the dramatist's action and inventiveness, Tamburlaine is doomed to disappear suddenly, to end his life not in Jerusalem, the heavenly city, but, as the Elizabethans probably anticipated, in Babylon, the gate of hell, a climax proper to the career of a false prophet. A character of this mettle is barred from the precincts of the heavenly regions as described in the Bible. There are enough allusions in the play to suggest that Tamburlaine is no better than an inmate of the regions of hell, a devil, or a character from the lower regions.[275] If Marlowe wished his hero to emulate and supplant Mahomet, the model of false prophets par excellence. if he wished him to pursue a great career but one restricted to the regions on this side of heaven, then it was fitting that Tamburlaine should become acutely aware that he was but a man satisfied with material and earthly benefits, with a crown, riches, honour and glory, a man infatuated with his own imaginations and a false prophet destined to no more than the glitter of Babylon.

Thus, in a typically Marlovian fashion, the dramatist has evoked the whole gamut of theories about true and false prophets in his short phrase "misled by dreaming prophesies". In this expression, clash the range of notions about the nature, prerogatives, powers, and importance of the true prophet as opposed to those of the false ones. The words evoke the roster of Biblical names, of good and bad prophets, morally diametrically opposed to each other, but each having a role and place in the events of the history of God's people. The expression is ambiguous, allows for no clear-cut line to be drawn between the true and the false. This ambiguity is passed on to Tamburlaine and his mission. Throughout the play, the dramatist never makes

---

274. See above, p. 171; pp. 356 ff.; p. 362, n. 56.

275. See 1T 2.6.1, 20; 4.1.42; 2T 3.5.21-29; etc.

a clear moral judgment on his hero. From the beginning to the end of the play, the audience is forced to detect in him good and bad traits but never does Marlowe clearly categorize his hero. Perhaps the dramatist is relying on the perceptive spectator to detect elements in the dramatic action which morally qualify his Tamburlaine.

From the above study of the prophetic aspects of Tamburlaine, a few observations may be made. First of all, not all of Tamburlaine's life and career is equally determined by prophetic insights. Most of the evidence used to support the study of this aspect is drawn from the first few scenes of the play when Marlowe is obviously concentrating on ways and means of building up the dramatic figure of his hero. Thus, the prophetic elements in the play are used in the phase preparatory to Tamburlaine's main mission as a Scourge. During this phase, the author steers his hero through a series of timely and successful episodes, the effects of which bring about an evolution in every area of Tamburlaine's life and career. Under the author's pen, the solitary figure of Tamburlaine, leader of a small unruly band of shepherd-thieves like himself, is transformed into a superhuman warrior of power and fame. In the course of these scenes, Tamburlaine manages to accumulate possessions in terms of armies, crowns, and territories, possessions which do more than just to build up an aura of political and military prestige for himself. While Tamburlaine moves from one initiative to the next, he develops an assurance and self-reliance which gradually dispel in him, as well as in the audience, all hesitation about the outcome of his future enterprises. As Tamburlaine meets successive challenges, each entailing greater risks than the previous ones, the dramatist builds up in the audience the expectation that, for some mysterious reason which appears inexplicable to his colleagues on the stage, the final result will inevitably be to the advantage of the hero. Powers, divine or other, greater than Tamburlaine's innate ambitious drives and greater than the fortune of his stars, have used these prophetic elements for a purpose

other than merely to satisfy Tamburlaine's greed for power. They are shaping Tamburlaine's future role and destiny. Step by step, Tamburlaine becomes aware that his function is to be greater than just to become "the Monarch of the East" (1T 1.1.43). This awareness develops into a conviction which makes him affirm in no hesitant manner that he is the one who is "tearmed the Scourge and Wrath of God / The onely feare and terrour of the world" (1T 3.3.44-45) whose first duty is to subdue the Turk. From this moment, the mission of Tamburlaine as Scourge of God dominates the play and determines the action of the hero and, one may add, the reaction of his stage colleagues as well. Tamburlaine grows in scope as a leader; his limited sphere of activity as a local shepherd opens out onto the world scene as a warrior of fame and power. In this evolution, Tamburlaine has followed a pattern similar to that of several Biblical heroes, a pattern undoubtedly familiar to Marlowe's contemporaries.[276] As happens in the story of these Biblical characters, Tamburlaine moves from the prophetic and introductory phase of his career to the full realization of the purposes to which he was prophetically destined and led, politically to that of ruler of the East, morally to that of the Scourge of God.

As has been intimated before, Tamburlaine's declaration, "I that am tearmd the Scourge and Wrath of God" raises him above the common run of humanity. The phrase suggests that a close relationship exists between God and Tamburlaine on two different levels. For Tamburlaine, to declare himself as the "Wrath of God" implies that he equates or identifies himself with at least one of the divine prerogatives or attributes, that he presents himself as a possible personification of the Wrath of God. To declare himself as the Scourge of God establishes his action as divinely instigated, as a realization of the wishes of the wrathful God. Thus Tamburlaine is intimately linked with God at the two levels of identity and action. Marlowe very soon affirms this especially close relationship.

---

276. For Knolles's opinions on this subject, see above p. 455.

After the defeat of Bajazet, Tamburlaine's first major deed as a Scourge, he climbs on the captive king used as a footstool and triumphantly proclaims:

> Now cleare the triple region of the aire,
> And let the majestie of heaven beholde
> Their Scourge and Terrour treade on Emperours.
> (1T 4.2.30-32)

The expression "their Scourge ...", the use of the possessive adjective in this phrase, do more than volumes could to establish unmistakably a close, co-operative, and even affectionate relationship between the God of Scourges and his Scourge. How does this relationship translate itself into the person and action of Tamburlaine? How do the person and action of Tamburlaine in this role reflect those of God?

To an Elizabethan dramatist and audience, the most immediate source of ideas about the wrathful and scourging God were again the pages of Holy Scripture, more specifically those of the Old Testament. What mental and moral image of the God of the Bible might the expression "Wrath of God" conjure up in the minds of those even relatively familiar with the Scriptural text? How would Tamburlaine compare with this image?

Because of the Biblical connotations attached to the expression, for Tamburlaine to declare himself as the "Wrath of God" is to describe himself in no moderate terms. From the first book of the Bible to the last, the wrath of God animates, colours, and determines episodes and events, by far too numerous to comment in any detail in this study. The presence of the wrath of God, its causes and effects, permeate the pages of the history of Israel and, by extension, of mankind. This history is to a large extent presided over and shaped by a Lord whose unfavourable dispositions towards his people or his enemies, as the case may be, range in intensity from displeasure, indignation, anger, rage, fury, to the essence of wrath, each degree often combined with and coloured by one or more, other degree of intensity. The pages of the Bible repeatedly present a Lord of Israel

roused to cruel,[277] terrible,[278] heavy[279] and wrathful[280] displeasure,[281] to a fierceness[282] of wrathful[283] indignation[284] and anger,[285] to rage[286]

---

277. For the "cruel displeasure" of God, see B.V., Ezek. 22:31; etc.

278. For God's "terrible displeasure", see B.V., Jer. 30:24, etc.

279. For the "heavy displeasure" of God, see B.V., Ps., T.H., 78:21; etc.

280. For God's "wrathful displeasure", see B.V., G.V., Ps. 69:24; B.V., Isa. 42:25; B.V., Ezek. 6:12; 8:18; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 36:18; B.V., Zeph. 3:8; B.V., Zech. 10:3; B.V., 1 Macc. 2:49; etc.

281. For references to God's "displeasure", see B.V., Num. 11:1; B.V., Ps. C.P. ., 21:9; B.V., Ps. C.P.T., 78:39, 49, 59; B.V., Ps. 90:7, 11; B.V., Isa. 34:2; B.V., Jer. 21:5; 33:5; 36:7; 42:18; B.V., Lam. 4:11; B.V., Ezek. 7:8; B.V., Hos. 13:11; B.V., G.V., Zeph. 2:2; etc.

282. For references to God's "fierceness of indignation", see G.V., Ps. 78:49; etc.

283. For references to God's "wrathful indignation", see B.V., Ps. T.H. 85:3; B.V., Ps. 90:7; B.V., Jer. 6:11; G.V., Jer. 49:37; B.V., Ezek. 30:15; B.V., Hos. 8:5; B.V., Ecclus. 18:23; B.V., G.V., Ecclus. 45:19; G.V., 1 Macc. 2:49; etc.

284. For references to God's "indignation", see B.V., Num. 25:3; B.V., G.V., Deut. 29:28; B.V., G.V., Job 40:11; B.V., G.V., Ps. 69:24; B.V., Ps. 88:6 (G.V., Ps. 88:7); B.V. Isa. 10:25; G.V., Isa. 34:2; B.V., G.V., Isa. 66:15; B.V., Jer. 4:4, 26; 6:11; G.V., Jer. 6:11, n. (l); B.V., G.V., Jer. 7:20; B.V., Jer. 10:25; 15:14; 17:4; 18:23; G.V., Jer. 21:5; B.V., G.V., Jer. 25:15; G.V., Jer. 25:37; B.V., G.V., Jer. 25:38; B.V., Jer. 42:18; 44:6; G.V., Jer. 49:37; B.V., Lam. 2:3; B.V., Ezek. 5:14; 14:19; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 20:8, 13, 21; 21:31; G.V., Ezek. 22:31; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 24:13; 25:14; G.V., Ezek. 36:6; B.V., Ezek. 38:18; G.V., Ezek. 38:19; B.V., G.V., Amos 5:15; G.V., Amos 7:4, n. (d); G.V., Zeph. 3:8; B.V., G.V., Ecclus. 36:7; etc.

285. For reference to God's "fierceness of anger", see G.V., Ps. 78:49; etc.
For references to the "angry Lord", see B.V., G.V., Gen. 18:30, 32; B.V., G.V., Exod. 14:14; G.V., Num. 12:9; B.V., G.V., Num. 32:13; B.V., G.V., Deut. 1:37; 4:21; 9:20; 32:19; B.V., G.V., 1 Kgs. 8:46; 11:9; B.V., G.V., 2 Kgs. 13:3; B.V., G.V., Ezra 9:14; B.V., G.V., Ps. 76:7; G.V., Ps. 78:21; B.V., Isa. 34:2; 57:17; 60:10; G.V., Lam. 5:22; B.V., G.V., Zech. 1:15; B.V., G.V., Mal. 1:4; G.V., 4 Esdras 16:49; etc.
For references to a "Lord of anger", see G.V., Deut. 9:4, n. (d); 9:8; B.V., G.V., Deut. 29:23; G.V., Deut. 29:28; B.V., G.V., 2 Kgs. 13:3; 17:17; B.V., G.V., Ezra 9:14; G.V., Job 7:9, n. (e); 9:13; B.V., Ps. T.H., 74:1; G.V., Ps. 78:38; B.V., Ps. 78:49; G.V., Ps. 78:58; 90:7, 11; G.V., Isa. 10:25; B.V., Isa. 34:2; G.V., Isa. 66:15; G.V., Jer. 15:14; 18:23; 21:5; 23:20; 32:29; 33:5, n. (e); 36:7; 42:18; 44:6; G.V., Lam. 4:16; B.V., Ezek. 5:14 (G.V., Ezek. 5:13); B.V., Ezek. 5:16; G.V., Ezek. 7:8; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 16:42; 22:20; G.V., Ezek. 38:18; B.V., G.V., Dan. 9:16; G.V., Hos. 13:11; G.V., Nah. 1:2 and n. (e); G.V., Nah. 1:6, n. (g); G.V., Zech. 9:1, n. (b); G.V., 3 Esdras 1:52; B.V., G.V., Ecclus. 28:10 etc.

286. See B.V., Ps., T.H., 78:38, 49; etc.

and fury[287] to a great[288] heavy,[289] hot,[290] consuming,[291] horrible[292] and terrible[293] fierce[294] wrath[295] whose furiousness[296] in force and power[297]

---

287. See B.V., Ps. 21:9; B.V., Ps. T.H., 78:49; G.V., Isa. 59:18; etc.

288. For references to God's "great wrath", see B.V., G.V., 2 Kgs. 22:13; B.V., G.V., 2 Chr. 34:21; B.V., Jer. 12:13; 36:7; etc.

289. For references to God's "heavy wrath", see B.V., T.H., Ps. 78:30; B.V., Lam. 4:11; etc.

290. For references to God's "hot wrath", see B.V., Exod. 22:23; B.V., G.V., Exod. 32:10, 11; B.V., G.V., Deut. 7:4; 29:27; 31:17; B.V., Josh. 7:1; B.V., G.V., Josh. 23:16; B.V., G.V., Judges 2:14; B.V., Ps. C.P.V., 74:1; B.V., Rom. 12:20, n. (d), etc.

291. For references to God's "consuming wrath", see B.V., G.V., Exod. 15:7; 32:10, 12; B.V., G.V., Ps. 59:13; G.V., Ps. 129:6, n. (c); B.V., G.V., Ezek. 22:31; 43:8; B.V., G.V., Ecclus. 36:9; B.V., Rom. 12:20, n. (d); etc.

292. For references to God's "horrible wrath", etc., see B.V., G.V., Jer. 25:37; G.V., Acts 2:24, n. (t); etc.

293. For references to God's "terrible wrath", see B.V., Isa. 51:20; B.V., Jer. 21:5, 12; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 36:6; etc.

294. For references to God's "fierce wrath", see B.V., G.V., Exod. 32:12, 22; B.V., G.V., Num. 32:14; B.V., G.V., Deut. 29:24; B.V., G.V., Ezra 10:14; G.V., Isa. 42:25; G.V., Jer. 4:26; 30:24; 51:45; G.V., Lam. 2:3; 4:11; B.V., G.V., Jon. 3:9; G.V., Zeph. 3:8; B.V., G.V., Wisd. 5:21; etc.

295. For references to God's wrath", see G.V., Lev. 17:10, n. (g); B.V., G.V., Num. 12:9; B.V., G.V., Deut. 9:19; 29:20, 23, 28; G.V., 2 Kgs. 15:8, n. (d); B.V., G.V., 2 Chr. 12:12; 24:18; B.V., G.V., Ezra 8:22; G.V., Job 16:9, n. (k); B.V., G.V., Job 21:17; 40:11; G.V., Ps. 21:9; 78:31; B.V., Ps. C.P.V., 78:39; G.V., Ps. 78:58; 90:7, 11; B.V., Isa. 9:11; B.V., G.V., Isa. 9:17, 19, 21; 10:25; G.V., Isa. 34:2; 51:20; 60:10; 63:5; B.V., G.V., Isa. 66:15; B.V., Jer. 4:26; G.V., Jer. 6:11; B.V., G.V., Jer. 7:20; G.V., Jer. 10:25; 21:5; B.V., Jer. 23:20; G.V., Jer. 7:20; G.V., Jer. 10:25; 21:5; B.V., Jer. 23:20; G.V., Jer. 25:37, 38; B.V., G.V., Jer. 33:5; G.V., Jer. 36:7; B.V., G.V., Jer. 42:18; 44:6; G.V., Jer. 49:37; B.V., Jer. 51:45; B.V., G.V., Lam. 1:12; 2:2; B.V., Lam. 2:3; B.V., Ezek. 5:14 (G.V., Ezek. 5:13); B.V., Ezek. 5:16; G.V., Ezek. 6:12; 7:3; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 7:8; G.V., Ezek. 8:18; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 16:38, 42; 20:8, 21; 21:31; B.V., Ezek. 22:13, n. (d); B.V., G.V., Ezek. 22:20, 21, 24, 31; 24:8; 25:14, 17; 38:18; B.V., Ezek. 38:19; B.V., G.V., Dan. 9:16; B.V., Dan. 11:36; B.V., G.V., Hos. 13:11; B.V., Amos 9:9, n. (f); B.V., G.V., Mic. 5:15; B.V., Nah. 1:2; B.V., G.V., Nah. 1:6; G.V., Nah. 1:6, n. (e); B.V., G.V., Zeph. 1:5, 18; 2:2; B.V., Zech. 6:8; B.V., G.V., 3 Esdras 8:22; 9:13; B.V., G.V., 4 Esdras 15:23, 38; B.V., Judith 9:11; B.V., Wisd. 11:9 (G.V., Wisd. 11:8); B.V., G.V., Ecclus. 5:7; G.V., Ecclus. 18:23; B.V., Ecclus. 28:10; G.V., Ecclus. 39:28; B.V., G.V., 1 Macc. 3:8; B.V., 2 Macc. 8:11; G.V., Luke 21:23, n. (f); G.V., Acts 2:24, n. (t); B.V., Rom. 1:8; B.V., G.V., Rom. 9:22; B.V., Rom. 13:4; B.V., G.V., Rev. 6:16; G.V., Rev. 6:16, n. (u); B.V., G.V., Rev. 14:10; etc.

296. For references to the furiousness or the fierceness of the wrath of the Lord, see B.V., G.V., Deut. 9:19; B.V., G.V., 2 Kgs. 23:26; B.V., G.V., 2 Chr. 30:8; B.V., Ps., C.P.V., and G.V., Ps. 78:49; G.V., Ps. 85:3; B.V., G.V., Nah. 1:6; etc.

297. See B.V., G.V., Ps. 90:11; etc.

breathes forth vengeance[298], burns like a fire unquenchable,[299] erupts like storms and tempests.[300] The Bible presents a Lord of wrathful countenance[301] whose looks are deadly,[302] who pours vials of his wrath upon the earth,[303] whose day[304] and hour[305] of wrathful vengeance will be deterred by no one or nothing.[306] The anger and wrath of this Lord is stirred,[307] provoked,[308]

---

298. See G.V., Gen. 42:22, n. (g); B.V., Exod. 17:14, n. (d); G.V., Lev. 17:10, n. (g); B.V., Lev. 24:11, n. (a); B.V., G.V., Deut. 32:41, 42, 43; B.V., Judges 2:15, n. (f): 9:57, n. (l); B.V., 1 Sam. 15:3, n. (b); G.V., 2 Sam. 17:23, n. (m); 18:9, n. ( ); G.V., Esther 7:7, n. (c); B.V., G.V., Job 31:23; B.V., Ps. T.H., 17:13, n. (d); G.V., Ps. 59:13, n. (l); G.V., Isa. 1:24, n. (i); G.V., Isa. 44:11, n. (q); B.V., G.V., Isa. 61:2; G.V., Isa. 66:15, n. (q); G.V., Jer. 1:16, n. (p); G.V., Jer. 11:20; B.V., G.V., Jer. 51:6; G.V., Jer. 51:18; n. (l); B.V., Ezek. 22:13, n. (d); B.V., G.V., Ezek. 24:8; 25:14, 17; B.V., G.V., Mic. 5:15; B.V., G.V., Nah. 1:2; G.V., Zeph. 3:8, n. (f); B.V., G.V., Ecclus. 5:7; 39:28, 29, 30; G.V., Ecclus. 46:1; G.V., 2 Macc. 8:11; B.V., Luke 3:9, n. (c); G.V., Acts 13:41, n. (q); G.V., Rom. 13:2, n. (a); G.V., Rom. 13:4, etc.

299. See B.V., G.V., 2 Chr. 34:25; B.V., Jer. 4:4, 26; B.V., G.V., Jer. 21:12; etc.

300. See B.V., Ps.,T.H., 88:6; G.V., Ps. 88:7, n. (e); etc.

301. See B.V., Deut. 6:15; B.V., Num. 11:1; B.V., G.V., Num. 25:4; B.V. G.V., Nah. 1:6; etc.

302. See G.V., Ps. 76:7, n. (e); etc.

303. See B.V., G.V., Rev. 16:1; etc.

304. See B.V., Isa. 61:2; B.V., G.V., Jer. 46:10; 51:6; B.V., Prov. 11:4; etc.

305. See B.V., Ecclus. 18:23; etc.

306. See B.V., Gen. 18:21, n. (r); B.V., G.V., Isa. 10:25; B.V., Ezek. 5:14; G.V., Ezek . 6:12; B.V., Ezek. 7:8; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 20:8, 21; G.V., Ecclus. 39:28; etc.

307. See G.V., Ps. 78:38; B.V., Ps., T.H., 78:58; etc.

308. See B.V., Num. 11:1; B.V., G.V., Deut. 9:8; 32:16, 21; G.V., 1 Kgs. 15:30, n. (l); B.V., G.V., 1 Kgs. 22:53; B.V., G.V., 2 Kgs. 24:20; B.V., Ps. C.P.V. and G.V., 78:58; B.V., Jer. 32:29; B.V., G.V., Jer. 32:31; 44:38; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 8:17; G.V., Nah. 1:6, n. (g); B.V., G.V., 3 Esdras 6:15; etc.

and kindled[309] by specific causes. Idolatry,[310] and its related attitudes of stubbornness[311] and resistance[312] to the laws of God, arouses his jealousy.[313] His is the right to be the one and only God and he fires his fury against those who, by indulging in these evils, have become abhorred by heaven.[314] The wrath of the Lord cannot be turned away;[315] it must have

---

309. See G.V., Exod. 9:19, n. (c); 22:23; G.V., Num. 11:1; B.V., G.V., Num. 11:10, 13, 33; 12:9; 22:22; G.V., Num. 25:3; B.V., G.V., Num. 32:10; G.V., Deut. 6:15; 11:17; B.V., G.V., Deut. 32:22; G.V., Josh. 7:1; also G.V., Judges 2:20; 3:8; 10:7; B.V., G.V., 2 Kgs. 22:13, 17; B.V., G.V., Job 19:11; G.V., Ps. 74:1; 78:21; B.V., G.V., Ps. 106:40; G.V., Ps. 124:3; B.V., G.V., Isa. 5:25; G.V., Isa. 9:18, n. (p); B.V., Isa. 34:2; B.V., Jer. 4:4; G.V., Jer. 6:11, n. (l); B.V., G.V., Jer. 15:14; G.V., Jer. 17:4; B.V., Jer. 42:18; G.V., Jer. 44:6; B.V., Ezek. 24:5, n. (e); 30:16; G.V., Hos. 8:5; G.V., Zech. 10:3; B.V., G.V., 4 Esdras 16:9; B.V., G.V., Ecclus, 16:6; B.V., G.V., 1 Macc. 2:24; G.V., Matt. 26:38, n. (p); etc.

310. See B.V., Exod. 35:14, n. (b); etc.

311. See G.V., Amos 7:4, n. (d). Stubbornness is as the wickedness of idolatry: B.V., G.V., 1 Sam. 15:23. See also B.V., G.V., 2 Kgs. 17:14. Stubbornness is the equivalent to wicked imaginations: cf. B.V., Jer. 11:8 and G.V., Jer. 11:8. Stubbornness is another word for pride: cf. B.V., Jer. 13:17 and G.V., Jer. 13:17. See also G.V., Jer. 13:17, n. (f); B.V., Jer. 17:23. God's indignation was inflamed against the stubbornness of this people: G.V., Jer. 42:18, and n. (g); etc.

312. "Gods dredful iudgement is executed agaynst them that resist his ryght hande": B.V., Exod. 14:18, n. (e). God "shal subdue all that resist": G.V., Num. 24:17, n. (l). The Lord is destructive to "them that comme not to hym in reuerence and feare, but contrariwise resist him": B.V., Deut. 4:24, n. (l). See also G.V., Ezra 7:25, n. (o). The word "Satan" in Matt. 16:23 is explained as "an aduersarie who resisteth the wil of God, either of malice as did Iudas, or of rashenes and arrogancie as Peter did: G.V., Matt. 16:23, n. (o). See also Rom. 9:19; 13:2; 2 Tim. 3:8; etc.

313. See B.V., G.V., Exod. 20:8; B.V., Exod. 34:14 and n. (b); G.V., Exod. 34:14; B.V., G.V., Num. 25:11; B.V., G.V., Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 29:20; G.V., Deut. 32:21; B.V., G.V., Josh. 24:19; B.V., Ps. T.H., 78:58; B.V., Ps. T.H., and G.V., Ps. 79:5; B.V., Ezek. 5:14; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 16:38, 42; G.V., Ezek. 16:42, n. (t); B.V., Ezek. 36:6; 38:19; B.V., G.V., Nah. 1:2; B.V., G.V., Zeph. 1:18; 3:8; B.V., G.V., Zech. 8:2; B.V., Wisd. 5:18. (G.V., Wisd. 5:17); etc.

314. "My soule shal abhorre you", says the Lord to the idolaters: see G.V., Lev. 26:30. "God ... was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel": G.V., Ps. 78:59. "Therefore was the wrath of God kindled against his people: insomuche that he abhorred his owne inheritance": B.V., Ps., T.H., 106:38; G.V., Ps. 106:40; B.V., Jer. 42:18; etc.

315. See G.V., Isa. 5:25; 9:12;10:4; B.V., Jer. 23:20; B.V., G.V., Baruch 1:13; etc.

its course and be poured forth.[316] It is impossible to be repressed in face of the evils which kindle it. The pages of the Bible are filled with the laments of the people groaning under the weight of the Lord's wrathful vengeance. They wonder how long the anger of the Lord will continue[317] and look for means of appeasing and pacifying[318] or of turning away this ceaseless wrath which must be fulfilled and executed.

Unless God uses the cataclysmic forces of nature for this purpose, he can execute his wrath and vengeance in practical terms only through the co-operative action of an agent. This agent must necessarily be ready to carry out the dictates of an ireful God and be animated by feelings of wrath and vengeance similar to those of this God of wrath. The Bible speaks of "spretes that are created for vengeance",[319] whose purpose is to "pacifie the wrath of him that made them".[320] "In the time of destruction, they shewe forthe their power, and accomplish the wrath of him that made them".[321] The annotator of the first Book of Samuel speaks of kings who have a right to usurp authority and execute cruelty because they "reigne in Gods wrath".[322] The same book tells this detail about Saul: "And the Spirit of God came

---

316. See B.V., Ps., T.H., 69:24; B.V., Isa. 42:25; G.V., Jer. 6:11; B.V., G.V., Jer. 7:20; 10:25; G.V., Jer. 42:18; 44:6; B.V., G.V., Lam. 2:4; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 7:8; 9:8; G.V., Ezek. 14:19; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 22:22; G.V., Ezek. 30:15; B.V., G.V., Hos. 5:10; B.V., G.V., Zeph. 3:8; B.V., G.V., 4 Esdras 15:44; B.V., G.V., Ecclus. 36:7; etc.

317. See B.V., Ps. T.H., 79:5; etc.

318. See G.V., Gen. 8:21, n. (k); G.V., Exod. 29:16, n. (d); 28:38, n. (p); 29:36, n. (m); G.V., Lev. 1:9, n. (f); 2:5, n. (e); B.V., G.V., Num. 25:4; G.V., Num. 25:13, n. (g); B.V., Josh. 22:17, n. (h); B.V., 1 Sam. 2:25, n. (q); B.V., 2 Sam. 21:6, n. (e); B.V., Ezek. 5:14, n. (d); G.V., Zech. 6:8; B.V., Ecclus. 39:28; G.V., Ecclus. 45:23; 48:10; B.V., Luke 19:38, n. (e); etc.

319. G.V., Ecclus. 39:28.

320. B.V., Ecclus. 39:28.

321. G.V., Ecclus. 39:28.

322. G.V., 1 Sam. 8:11, n. (f).

vpon Saul, ... and he was exceding angry"[323] and went forth to battle. The annotator adds that in this way "God gaue him the spirit of strength and courage to go against this tyrant",[324] in this case, Nabash the Ammonite. Elsewhere, Isaiah mentions nations, the army of the Medes and Persians,[325] coming in as the ministers of his wrath,[326] as the "weapons of his wrath to destroy the whole land".[327] Kings and nations become God's "vessels of wrath ordained to destruction",[328] used for the purpose of exercising God's revenge. For God can be the wrathful shepherd breaking forth in anger against the sheep of his pasture.[329] The effects of this anger are that "their best fieldes lye dead, because of the horrible wrath of the Lorde".[330] A wrathful shepherd, or God, sending forth his Spirit of Wrath on kings and nations to be his ministers of vengeance: are these elements so very different from Tamburlaine and his situation in the play?

As was pointed elsewhere in this study,[331] the God of Tamburlaine, especially in the second part of the play, is a faithful reproduction of the fiery God of Israel. "The vengeance of the highest / And jealous anger of his fearfull arme" (2T 2.1.56-57) are poured with rigour on sinful heads (2T 2.1.58). Tamburlaine is the scourge of a "God full of revenging wrath" (2T 5.1.182). There is something of the wrathful spirit of this God of Wrath present in Tamburlaine. A comparison of the regrettably too brief Biblical notes mentioned above about the God of Wrath of the Bible

---

323. B.V., G.V., 1 Sam. 11:6.

324. G.V., 1 Sam. 11:6, n. (c).

325. See G.V., Isa. 13:5, note (e).

326. See B.V., Isa. 13:5.

327. G.V., Isa. 13:5.

328. B.V., Rom. 9:22.

329. See Ps. 74:1.

330. B.V., Jer. 25:37.

331. See above, pp. 506 ff.

with the notes following below about the wrathful Tamburlaine of the play will show how the dramatist has incorporated wrath into the very being of his hero. Tamburlaine will be an effective scourge in the measure that wrath is inscribed in his nature or that his being is at one with the Wrath of God.

Tamburlaine is the wrathful inmate of a world of wrath. His being, his appearance, his activities, his opponents, all bear in some way the stamp of wrath and fury. One may even venture to say that Tamburlaine is meant to be, ontologically, the essence of wrath and fury. Meander, dismayed at the treachery of Tamburlaine, who has turned his armies against his king Cosroe, considers that Tamburlaine "was never sprong of humaine race" (1T 2.6.11) and concludes that Tamburlaine's being is the product of "some powers divine, or els infernall" (1T 2.6.9) who mixed "Their angry seeds at his conception" (1T 2.6.10).[332] He suggests by these words that seeds of anger were the source of life for Tamburlaine as an essential part of his being from the very first moments of his existence; they were even agents bringing him into life. Ortygius, another of Tamburlaine's enemies, wonders whether he is a "God, or Feend, or spirit of the earth / Or Monster turned to a manly shape" (1T 2.6.15-16). Ortygius would seem to imply that Tamburlaine is the incarnate form of some supranatural or superhuman entity. Finally, the same speaker questions whether Tamburlaine is "from earth, or hell, or heaven" (1T 2.6.23). Tamburlaine is possibly of the three, an earthly-bound force wicked in deed in whom God or heaven has breathed his Spirit of Wrath. Anger or wrath, divine or fiendish, seem to define the entity or essence of Tamburlaine.

As is the case for a wrathful God and as may be expected from a "Wrath of God", Tamburlaine's countenance inspires death and terror. Foes "flie his angrie lookes" (1T 3.3.193). Agydas, caught in the act of inducing

---

332. The idea recurs in the play: see 2T 5.1.110.

Zenocrate to leave Tamburlaine and return to Arabia, her "first betrothed Love" (1T 5.1.530), summarizes the appearance and nature of Tamburlaine, the Wrath of God.

> Threatned with frowning wrath and jealousie,
> Surpriz'd with feare of hideous revenge,
> I stand agast: but most astonied
> To see his choller shut in secrete thoughtes,
> And wrapt in silence of his angry soule.
> Upon his browes was pourtraid ugly death,
> And in his eies the furie of his hart,
> That shine as Comets, menacing revenge.
> (1T 3.2.67-74)

Anger, wrath, jealousy, revenge, deadly looks, all the traits of the wrathful God are also those of Tamburlaine. Agydas, whose only aim has become to "wander free from feare of Tyrants rage" (1T 3.2.102), experiences the full portent of Tamburlaine's "killing frownes of jealousie" (1T 3.2.91). Tamburlaine's presence is essentially destructive. His sight is "compoode of furie and of fire" (2T 4.1.175), and "being wroth, sends lightning from his eies" (2T 1.3.75). Fury, fire, lightning are components of Tamburlaine's wrath. "In the furrowes of his frowning browes" (2T 1.3.77), he "harbors revenge, war, death and cruelty" (2T 1.3.78), as all good scourges should according to his teaching. "Seest thou not death within my wrathfull looks?" (2T 3.5.119) he asks Almeda, the former gaoler of Bajazet and Callapine and assistant to the latter's escape. Almeda is already aware that Tamburlaine's wrath is death" (2T 1.2.6). The Damascenes well know that Tamburlaine's "furie and incensed hate / Flings slaughtering terrour" (1T 5.1.71-72) from his tents. Tamburlaine can boast that they are "Halfe dead for feare before they feele [his] wrath" (1T 4.4.4). The preoccupations of Tamburlaine's stage colleagues are to soften or melt the cruelty deployed in the effects of this wrath. The Governor of Damascus is staking his hopes to melt Tamburlaine's fury into some remorse (1T 5.1.22) on the Virgins' pleas. Nevertheless, the second citizen of Babylon would rather kill himself than "bide the wrath of Tamburlaine" (2T 5.1.42).

Tamburlaine's "intollorable wrath" (2T 5.1.8) is grim and relentless. Nothing can shield the unfortunate victims who cross Tamburlaine's path from the cruel effects of his wrath (2T 3.5.127). From early in his career, Tamburlaine's repeated wrathful decrees develop into habits; his "customes are as peremptory/ As wrathfull Planets, death or destinie" (1T 5.1.127-128). Tamburlaine's wrath must be pacified by the sacrifice of lives and by the tyrannous treatment of victims. He has plans of conquering India and of making its kings "dig for treasure to appease /his/ wrath" (1T 3.3.265). He contemplates torturing Almeda for a similar purpose (2T 3.5.121 ff.). The same idea is used in the pleas addressed to Tamburlaine by the Governor of Babylon after he has received his first wound. (2T 5.1. 152-153). Tamburlaine's antagonists are visualized as angry rivals. "Angrie Jupiter" (1T 2.6.4), "Mars himselfe the angrie God of armes";[333] both are threatened by the presence of Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine wages an "angry war" (2T 1.3.87) as he pursues his "angry fate" (2T 2.3.47).

Tamburlaine's wrath and fury even invade areas of his private life. Zenocrate's influence on Tamburlaine is analysed as and limited to calming the fury of Tamburlaine's wrath and sword (1T 5.1.437). Even Zenocrate's illness and death are spoken of in relation to wrath and fury. She talks Tamburlaine out of his idea of committing suicide for grief over her loss by reminding him of the effects this would have on her present rest and second or after-life. Both would become but grief and fury (2T 2.4.65-68). Her illness is understood as a "proud furie and intollorable fit / That dares torment the body of /his/ Love" (2T 2.4.78-79). When she dies, Tamburlaine's wrath grows out of all proportions until Theridamas, in a wiser and more stable frame of mind, points to the futility of this raging fit: "Ah, good my Lord be patient, she is dead, / And all this raging cannot make her live" (2T 2.4.119-120). Tamburlaine's sons live under the gloom of their father's wrath. Amyras "would not bide the furie of /his/ father" (2T 4.1.45) in exchange for any amount of wealth. He would have

---

333. 1T 2.7.58; 5.1.125, 326.

his brother follow their "fathers sword, / That flies with fury swifter than our thoughts, / And cuts down armies with his conquering wings" (2T 4.1.4-6). The fate of Calyphas, who has withdrawn from his father's wrathful leadership, has already been analysed. As may be expected, the hour comes when the wrath and fury of Tamburlaine claim their price. Tamburlaine becomes the victim of this wrath which has been a source of havoc, destruction, and grief to all but himself. As the author of Job warns his reader, Tamburlaine destroys himself with his anger.[334] He is as "one that teareth his soule in his anger",[335] "like a mad man".[336] The Turkish king's wish that Tamburlaine might "drie up with anger, and consume with heat" (2T 4.1.180) comes true. In vain does the physician administer the "potion / Which wil abate the furie of /his/ fit, / And cause milder spirits governe /him/" (2T 5.3.78-80). Tamburlaine's "vaines are full of accidentall heat" (2T 5.3.84), the moisture of his blood is dried (2T 5.3.85), the "Artiers which alongst the vaines convey / The lively spirits which the heart ingenders, / Are parcht and void of spirit" (2T 5.3.93-96).[337] In spite of the temporary and illusory cure of his illness by a wrathful spate of fighting against Callapine and his army (2T 5.3.101 ff), the angry seeds at his conception have done their work. The destructive force of wrath present in the birth, life, and illness of Tamburlaine turns against him and destroys him as the "Wrath of God". After having presided over and determined the character of every area of his private and public life, the fire of Tamburlaine's wrath claims its price: Tamburlaine dies a victim of his

---

334. B.V., Job 18:4.

335. G.V., Job 18:4.

336. G.V., Job 18:4, note (c). "A man of great wrath shal suffer pounishment": B.V., Prov. 19:19. So will "a man of much anger": G.V., Prov. 19:19. "Thogh for a time he giue place to counsel, yet sone after wil he giue place to his raging affection": G.V., Prov. 19:9, n. (f). Zeal and anger shorten the days of one's life: See B.V., Ecclus. 30:24. So do "enuie and wrath": G.V., Ecclus. 30:24.

337. It may be noted here how skilfully Marlowe makes use of the contemporary theories about the interplay of the four elements of air, water, fire and earth as the cause of health or illness and uses them to sustain the wrathful destructive trait of Tamburlaine's character.

own wrath. Is it any wonder that Tamburlaine in the play personifies in the fullest sense possible "the anger of the highest" (2T 5.1.104), or "the wrathfull messenger of mighty Jove" (2T 5.1.92), is the "Wrath of God"?

The factors which stir, provoke, and kindle the wrath of God have been enumerated above.[338] Tamburlaine's "wrath kindled in the furnace of his breast" (2T 4.1.9) is aroused by the same causes. Enough has been said already about the significance of idolatry which seems to be present in the play.[339] The Damascene Governor describes the attitude they have which, if it is not changed, will spell their doom. He says: "To resist with longer stubbornnesse, / ... / Were but to bring our wilfull overthrow" (1T 5.1.3,5). Tamburlaine tells the Virgins that "submissions comes too late" (1T 5.1.73). Stubborn resistance to Tamburlaine's will is the fault of his victims as it was of the victims of God's wrath in the Bible. The idea recurs again in the play. Tamburlaine explains his action in the following lines:

> I must apply my selfe ...,
> . . . . . .
> And plague such Pesants as resist in'me
> The power of heavens eternall majesty.
> (2T 4.1.155, 157-158)

In these lines we find again the idea of Tamburlaine being an incarnate presence of God. To resist Tamburlaine is to resist God in Tamburlaine[340] and is, therefore, worthy of extremely severe punishment. Tamburlaine, "the Wrath of God", is akin to the wrathful God of Israel and is incensed by the same kind of evils as those condemned and punished by God.

---

338. See above, pp. 509-511.

339. See above, ch. 3.

340. "They that rise against Gods ministers rebel against him": G.V., Ps. 106:17, n. (i).

This study has shown how the prophetic aspects of Tamburlaine, whether these pertain to a true or a false prophet, could determine what the audience could expect from the hero. It has been shown how the Biblical patterns of thought and action related to prophets shed light on the character of Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine's "dreaming prophesies" set him apart as one entrusted with a special mission. While he derives motivation for his action from his own human aspirations, the scale of his initiatives transcends those of an ordinary career. On the basis of evidence from the play, Tamburlaine's essence or being has been defined as a personification of the "Wrath of God". Tamburlaine is literally the embodiment of the Wrath of God acting through a chosen human agent according to patterns which can be found in the Bible. When Tamburlaine declares he is the "Wrath of God", he is really describing the fact that the two, he and the Wrath of God, are one. Tamburlaine's being has sprung from "angry seeds"; it expresses itself in wrath all through his career until he dies spent from the deeds of this Wrath. There remains to see how Tamburlaine's being, or Wrath, translates itself into deeds as a Scourge.

Chapter 6

TAMBURLAINE. THE SCOURGE OF GOD

Part 2

The wrath of God, once aroused, must be fulfilled in deeds. Unless Divine Wrath chooses to act throught the elements of nature, the execution of these deeds is left to human agents or scourges especially chosen for this purpose. Because God's wrath may be appeased only by extreme measures, war, with the slaughter and destruction it entails, seems to be the most efficient way of fulfilling this wrath. For this reason, scourges most often wage war. These scourges will be efficient in their role inasmuch as they act in total accordance with God's wishes or in a communion of mind and spirit with God identifying one with the other. It may be supposed that a good agent will reflect or be the image of the God of Scourges on whose behalf he is acting. What is the image of the Biblical God of Scourges and of his scourge?

The God presiding over the destiny of Israel is a warring God. He is explicitly termed as "a man of war",[1] a Lord of hosts.[2] In the wars undertaken by his scourges or agents, God is frequently described as fighting their battles for them,[3] or as overcoming the enemy himself.[4] The battles are the Lord's;[5]

---

1. B.V., G.V., Exod. 15:3.

2. The word "hosts" implies various meanings like heavenly bodies, angels, saints, etc.: see C.I. Scofield, ed., Holy Bible: Authorized King James Version (New York, 1967), p. 322, n. 1. Sometimes, "angels of heaven" is paraphrased as "heavenly soldiers": see B.V., G.V., Luke 2:13. The author of Job wonders: "Is there any number of his armies...?": see G.V., Job 25:3. The "army of heaven" is mentioned again in the Book of Daniel: see G.V., Dan. 4:14, n. (i).

3. "The Lord shall fight for you": G.V., Exod. 14:14. See also Deut. 3:22. And so is "God mightily fightyng for you": B.V., Exod. 14:14, n. (c). "God him selfe fyghteth for vs, our only stay and defence": B.V., Exod. 15:3, n. (b). Israel is warned not to fear "for the Lord your God goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, and to saue you": G.V., Deut. 20:4. See also B.V., G.V., Josh. 10:14, 42; B.V., G.V., 23:3, 10; 2 Chr. 20:29; 32:8; etc. "And with great warre shal he fyght agaynst his host": B.V., Isa. 30:32.

4. "In battel he ouercometh euer": G.V., Exod. 15:3, n. (c).

5. " ... for the battel is the Lords": G.V., 1 Sam. 17:47. Saul says to

(continued overleaf .....)

so are the victories.[6] God teaches war,[7] is the captain of Israel.[8] In fact, the part played by scourges often seems to be equally attributable to God and to his scourges. God and his agents seem to be almost interchangeable as authors of these particular deeds. Significantly, God is said to put his power in his chosen agents[9] and therefore God speaks of the accomplishments of his scourges as being his own. God is a warrior, his messengers are his captains. This is explicit in the case of the messenger sent by God to Joshua. Joshua identifies this messenger as the Lord's captain and worships him as if he were a god, so completely is the messenger identified with God.[10] This fact might be remembered

---

5. continued ..... David. "onely be a valiant sonne vnto me and fight the Lords battels" in exchange for his daughter: G.V., 1 Sam. 18:17. Of David, Abigail says, "Because my lord fighteth the battayles of the Lorde: and there coulde none euyl be founde in thee al thy dayes": B.V., 1 Sam. 25:28. See also B.V., G.V., 2 Chr. 20:15.

6. David "acknowledgeth that God was the autor of his victories, who gaue him strength": G.V., 2 Sam. 22:40, n. (q). Thou "goest out with thy people to warre, and giuest them the victorie": G.V., Ps. 68:24, n. (s). There are no allusions in the play about Tamburlaine's strength being derived from God in any special way, but there is about Tamburlaine's health being "strangely blest and governed by heaven": see 2T. 5.3.24-25.

7. See B.V., G.V., Judges 3:2.

8. "God hym selfe is our captayne, ... fight not agaynst the lord God of your fathers: for it wyl not prosper with you": B.V., 2 Chr. 13:12. See also B.V., G.V., 4 Esdras 16:76.

9. According to the Geneva Bible, the Lord says to Moses: "... for this cause haue I appointed thee, to shewe my power in thee, ...": Exod. 9:16. Israel said of itself that the Lord made them have dominion over the mighty: see B.V., Judges 5:13. See also B.V., G.V., Rom. 9:17. Of David, it is said, "Let him shewe his power, that he is gouernour of all the worlde": G.V., 2 Sam. 22:47, n. (u). God rules through David. "They comme out of a farre countrey, ... euen the Lorde hym selfe with the ministers of his wrath, to destroy the whole lande": B.V., Isa. 13:5.

10. "In that, that Iosuah worshippeth hym [the angel messenger], he acknowledgeth him to be god; and in that, that he calleth hym selfe the Lordes captayne, he declareth him selfe to be Christe": B.V., Josh. 5:14, n. (g). Zechariah "compareth God to a king, who hathe his postes and messengers abroad, by whome he stil worketh his purpose and bringeth his matters to passe": G.V., Zech. 1:7, n. (i). In this respect, Tamburlaine and his captains can be compared to God and his messengers. Tamburlaine's captains bring his plans to their full realization: see 2T. 1.3.112-225.

in connection with Tamburlaine as "the wrathfull messenger of mighty Jove" (2T. 5.1.92).[11] Israel's enemies despairing of victory, admit that God himself is fighting against them.[12] The deeds brought about by the fulfilment of God's wrath, whether these are executed directly by God or by his agents are equally disastrous. Biblical texts speak either of God or of his scourges or of both together killing all with the sword without respect of age, sex, or condition, or carrying out massive slaughters from which none may escape.[13] Nations are destroyed from the face of the earth,[14] lands are laid waste,[15] cities are con-

---

11. The idea of winged messengers sent by mighty Jove occurs also in 2T. 1.3. 166-167.

12. The plight of the Philistines is described as follows by the Biblical annotator: "Before we fought against menne: and nowe God is comme to fight against us": B.V., 1 Sam. 4:7, n. (d). "There is no remedie but destruction, where God is the enemie": G.V., Lam. 2:4, n. (f). "The Lord is become like as it were an enemie ..." B.V., Lam. 2:5. See also G.V., Lam. 2:5. "The Lorde hym selfe fought agaynst them": B.V., Ecclus. 46:6.

13. Israel typically summarizes campaigns as follows: "And we tooke al his cities the same season, and slue the menne, women and chyldren of al the cities and let nothyng remayne": B.V., Deut. 2:34. "And we utterly destroyed them, ... bringyng to nought al the cities, with menne, women, and chyldren": B.V., Deut. 3:6. God commands Israel to "utterly destroy" their enemies: see Deut. 7:2. See also Deut. 9:3. "For the Lord your God, ... regardeth no mans person, nor taketh rewarde": B.V., Deut. 10:17. "And they utterly destroyed all that was in the citie, bothe man and woman, yong and olde, ... with the edge of the sworde": G.V., Josh. 6:21. See also B.V., G.V., Josh. 11:11 and B.V. Josh. 11:11, n. (f). See also B.V., G.V., Josh. 8:26; 10:28, 30, 32, 33, 35, 37, 39, 40; 11:8, 11, 12, 14, 20, for Joshua's series of wholesale slaughters. See also B.V., G.V., 1 Sam. 15:3, 8; 22:19; 27:11. God claims he has destroyed all the enemies of David: see B.V., G.V., 2 Sam. 7:9. See also B.V., G.V., 1 Kgs. 20:20, 21. "Thus there was a great slaughter of young menne, olde menne, women, chyldren, and virgins" in Egypt by Antiochus: B.V., 2 Macc. 5:13. See also B.V., G.V., Jer. 18:21; 1 Macc. 5:51. "There shal none escape": B.V., Jer. 42:17.

14. The Lord says to Moses: "I ... wyl destroy al the people whyther thou shalt goe: ...": B.V., Exod. 23:27. He threatens to destroy Israel from the face of the earth if they do not abide by his laws: see Deut. 6:15. "Thou shalt consume al the nations whiche the Lorde thy God shal deliuer thee: thyne eye shal haue no pitie vpon them, nor shalt thou suffer their goddes": B.V., Deut. 7:16. This could describe Tamburlaine's attitude to the Turks as well as to their god Mahomet. "And when the Lorde thy God hath set them before thee, thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them, ...": B.V., Deut. 7:2. "But the Lorde thy God shall geue them ouer before thee, and shal destroy them with a mighty destruction vntil he haue brought them to nought": B.V., Deut. 7:23. See also B.V., G.V., Josh. 11:20, B.V., G.V., Ezek. 25:7; B.V., G.V., Nah. 1:9.

15. "The destroyer shal comme vpon al cities, none shal escape: The valleys

(continued overleaf.....)

sumed[16] as sacrifices to God,[17] and doomed under the threat of curses never to be rebuilt.[18] The effects of God's wrath, whether it is executed directly or through agents, are widespread desolation,[19] unpeopled lands,[20] smoking ruins of consumed cities, death and destruction[21] everywhere.

The landscape which Tamburlaine leaves behind him is hardly more cheering. Tamburlaine's claims that the power of God is in him have already been mentioned.[22] No one will dispute the fact that, whether Tamburlaine acts as the personified "Wrath of God" or as the agent or Scourge of that God, the above description of the disasters effected by the Biblical God of wrath would aptly depict those

---

15. Continued ..... shalbe destroyed, and the feeldes shalbe layde waste, lyke as the Lorde hath spoken": B.V., Jer. 48:8. See also B.V., G.V., Jer. 4:7; 25:37. "They shal knowe that I am the Lorde, when I make the lande desolate and waste, ...": B.V., G.V., Ezek. 33:29. See also B.V., G.V., Isa. 14:17; Jer. 18:16; Ezek. 6:14; 32:15.

16. "And they burnt al their cities wherein they dwelt, and al their goodly dwellyngs with fire": B.V., Num. 31.10. This treatment of the cities of the enemy of Israel is typical. "And we utterly destroyed them, ...bringyng to nought al the cities": B.V., Deut. 3:6. "And the citie shalbe accursed, ...": B.V., Josh. 6:17. By this it was "condemned vtterly to be destroyed": B.V., Josh. 6:17, n. (i). See also B.V., G.V., Josh 6:24. "And when ye have taken the citie, ye shal set it on fyre ...": B.V., Josh. 8:8. "And they entred into the citie and tooke it, and hasted, and set the citie on fyre": B.V., Josh. 8:19. See also Judges 1:8; B.V., G.V., Jer. 19:8.

17. Bozra is such a city "consumed as a sacrifice burnt to asshes": see G.V., Isa. 34:6 and n. (g). Elsewhere, with respect to the above, Jeremiah "calleth the slaughter of Gods enemies a sacrifice, because it is a thing that doeth please him": G.V., Jer. 46:10, n. (h).

18. Idolatrous cities were to be dealt with in this manner:"Burne with fyre both the citie and al the spoyle thereof euery whyt ... and it ... shalt not be built agayne": B.V., Deut. 13:16. "And Josuah swore at that tyme, sayeing, 'Cursed be the man before the Lorde, that ryseth vp and buyldeth this citie Iericho'": B.V., Josh. 6:26."Therefore is your land... an astonishment, and a curse and without inhabitant ...": see G.V., Jer. 44:22. See also B.V., G.V., Isa. 25:2; 34:10.

19. "I wil make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shal not returne, and ye shal knowe that I am the Lord": G.V., Ezek. 35:9. See also B.V., G.V., Ezek. 35:4. "Is not your lande desolate and voyde, yea and abhorred, ...?": B.V., Jer. 44:22. See also G.V., Jer. 44:22.

20. "Is not your lande desolate and voyde, ..., so that no man dwelleth therin any more, as it is comme to passe this day?": B.V., Jer. 44:22. See also G.V., Jer. 44:22.

21. "I wyl bryng plagues vpon the world, ... death, and destruction": B.V., G.V., 4 Esdras 15:5. See also ibid., 15:49; B.V., G.V., Job 28:22.

22. See above, pp. 511-512; p. 520 and n. 9.

brought about by Tamburlaine's warfare. Very soon after the fall of Bajazet, Tamburlaine's reputation is firmly established. Tamburlaine, "Without respect of Sex, degree or age, / ... raceth all his foes with fire and sword" (1T. 4.1. 63-63). He orders that all the inhabitants of Damascus "perish by our swords" (1T. 4.2.122). Events prove that they all do (1T. 5.1.120,134). Babylon shares a similar fate. At the end of the play, "the stately buildings of faire Babylon" (2T. 5.1.63) are brought down in ruins while all the Babylonians are drowned in a nearby lake (2T. 5.1.169-170). Between these two incidents, Tamburlaine performs various deeds of similar cruelty. The grief-stricken Tamburlaine burns down Larissa (2T. 3.2.1-5), the scene of Zenocrate's death, spreads death and destruction (2T. 3.2.5) as a sacrifice[23] and "forbids the world to build it up againe (2T. 3.2.18). To prepare his encounter with the Turkish Orcanes during which Tamburlaine anticipates that "halfe the world shall perish in this fight" (2T. 1.3.171), he sends Techelles and Theridamas "before to fire the townes, / The towers and cities of these hatefull Turks" (2T. 3.2. 147-148). On his way, Tamburlaine "means to fire Turky as he goes" (2T. 1.1.18) until he will force the Turk Callapine "at a bay" (2T. 3.2.151). Tamburlaine is the Scourge "That whips downe cities" (2T. 4.3.100). As "kingdomes /are/ made waste, brave cities sackt and burnt" (2T. 5.2.26), Tamburlaine spells "death and destruction" to all.

As was illustrated above,[24] Tamburlaine personifies the "Wrath of God". His patterns of destruction and the aftermath of desolation which Tamburlaine leaves behind him recall the effects of the irate God of Israel. The deeds of Tamburlaine the warrior reflect those of God, "the man of war". However, as was

---

23. Cf. "They shal perishe with the swoorde": B.V., Jer. 44:12, 17, 22; B.V., Hos. 13:16. Tamburlaine's burning of cities as sacrifices to celebrate Zenocrate's sad death and funeral is explicitly mentioned in the Prologue: "And with how many cities' sacrifice / He celebrated her sad funeral": 2T. Pro. 7-8.

24. See above, pp. 513 ff.

mentioned before,[25] Tamburlaine dominates the play principally as the Scourge of God. He fulfils this mission with various degrees of cruelty from the time of the fall of Bajazet to the end of his career. To be the "Scourge of God" is not necessarily synonymous with being the "wrath of God". While the latter concept embodies a definite aspect or characteristic of God, a "Scourge of God" is more concerned with action, with the execution of deeds proper to a Scourge, wrath being the instigating force driving the agent into action. However, as was again indicated above,[26] a scourge is effective in the measure that his action agrees and coincides with the purposes of the God for whom he is acting. This supposes a kind of relationship between God and his Scourge. What is the relationship between Tamburlaine as a Scourge and the God using him in that manner?

Throughout the play, from the time when Tamburlaine recognizes himself to be the "Scourge of God" until he dies, Marlowe's hero is fully confident that he is the chosen agent of God. A few points relative to Tamburlaine's special call have already been pointed out.[27] Tamburlaine's claims that the powers of heaven especially derive pleasure from the sight of "their Scourge" (1T. 4.2.32) performing his deeds have already been noted.[28] Tamburlaine's belief that the "power of heavens eternall majesty" (2T. 4.1.158)[29] resides in him, incidentally a privilege also enjoyed by Moses after God orders him to free Israel from the Egyptian domination, has been mentioned before.[30] However, for the sake of clarity

---

25. See above, pp. 446-447.

26. See above, pp. 513 ff. and p. 519.

27. See above, pp. 464-465.

28. See above, pp. 468-469 and p. 506.

29. Note the similarities between this expression and the following phrase from the Bible: "the throne of the majestie in the heauens": B.V., Heb. 8:1.

30. This is a privilege also enjoyed by other ministers of God. "God communicateth his auothoritie and power with his ministers": B.V., Exod. 7:1, n. (a). See also above, pp. 512-513 and p. 520, n. 9.

and even at the risk of repetition, there may be some value in quoting in full the most illuminating passage of the play in this respect. These lines, the most indicative of Tamburlaine's role as a "Scourge of God", occur immediately after the death of Calyphas. Faced with bitter criticisms and indignant remarks on the part of his colleagues about the manner with which he has dealt with the defection of his own son, Tamburlaine feels urged to offer them some explanation about the ruthless murder of Calyphas. In an attempt to soothe the feelings of horror and disgust experienced by his entourage, Tamburlaine clarifies his situation in the following lines:

> Villaines, these terrours and these tyrannies
> (If tyrannies wars justice ye repute)
> I execute, enjoin'd me from above,
> To scourge the pride of such as heaven abhors:
> Nor am I made Arch-Monark of the world,
> Crown'd and invested by the hand of Jove,
> For deeds of bounty or nobility:
> But since I exercise a greater name,
> The scourge of God and terrour of the world,
> I must apply my selfe to fit those tearmes,
> In war, in blood, in death, in crueltie,
> And plague such Pesants as resist in me
> The power of heavens eternall majesty.
> (2T. 4.1.146-158)

In these lines, Tamburlaine touches upon the essential points which govern his life and action as a scourge. He defines the priorities which determine his policy. His true greatness does not reside in the power acquired through the pursuits of his own ambitious drives or in his office as the "Arch-Monark of the world". The duties of kindness and liberality expected of a good Elizabethan ruler, even though he claims to have been crowned and invested by Jove himself, are superseded by those of "a greater name", those of a Scourge of God. Later in the play, Tamburlaine reaffirms the idea that this function is the essence of his greatness and being. During a speech in which Marlowe's hero has cruelly reviled the Turkish kings harnessed to his chariot and sketched the brutal treatment they might expect from him, he again uses a similar argument to justify his words and actions by roundly concluding:

> Thus am I right the Scourge of highest Jove,

> And see the figure of my dignitie
> By which I hold my name and majesty.
> (2T. 4.3.24-26)

Like several othe Marlovian expressions, these lines are ambiguous. To what does "the figure" refer? Is Tamburlaine pointing to the whip with which he is scourging the kings and which would symbolize his function as a scourge? Or is he referring to himself symbolized by the scourge or whip as the instrument by which he has acquired power, dignity, and majesty as ruler of the world, a power great enough for him to be able to force kings to serve as the beasts of burden harnessed to his chariot? Or, again, is he presenting himself as the visible "figure"[31] or image of God the Scourge by whom he holds his name "Scourge of God", his dignity and majesty being the earthly reminders of those of the divine powers?[32] In the same passage, Tamburlaine does not refrain from alluding to himself as a valour more divine than any other (2T. 4.3.15-16), the greatest source of honour possible to be had by his "pampered Jades of Asia" (2T. 4.3.1). It would seem that Tamburlaine sees himself as a divine agent, an earthly representative of God, whose special mission is symbolized by the scourge he is wielding and by which the Scourge that he is is invested with a divine aura,

---

31. U.M. Ellis-Fermor paraphrases the expression "figure of my dignity" as "the very image of my dignity": see Tamburlaine the Great in Two Parts (London, 1930) p. 255, n. 25. John D. Jump explains the words "see the figure" as meaning "behold in me the very image": see Tamburlaine the Great: Parts I and II (University of Nebraska, 1967) p. 170.

32. Could the references in the play which point to a form of identity between God and Tamburlaine have been inspired by passages in the New Testament which speak of a like identity existing between God and Christ as the following verses show? "He that hath seene me, hath seene the father": B.V., John 14:9. "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me": G.V., John 14:10. These passages affirm that "the verie fulness of the diuinitie remaineth in Christ": G.V., John 14:10, n. (f). In Christ "we se God as in his liuelie image": G.V., Luke 10:22, n. (q). "If ye had knowen me, ye should have knowen my Father also": G.V., John 8:19. See also B.V., G.V., John 12:45. "In Christ who is God manifest in the fleash, we see God the father as in a moste cleare glasse": B.V., 2 Cor. 3:18, n. (d). See also B.V., G.V., 2 Cor. 4:4; G.V., Heb. 1:3, n. (d). Could the passages in the play implying that some form of identity exists between Tamburlaine and God suggest a Messianic quality about Tamburlaine?

is a figure of the majesty of the highest Jove or the embodiment of "the power of heavens eternall majesty". The passage is not clear but the latter interpretation is possibly the closest to the truth about Marlowe's Tamburlaine. This interpretation is supported by other lines in the play.

Later in his career, Tamburlaine's view of himself as a divine agent is further confirmed. At the end of the play, the reader gets a final image of Tamburlaine as he is perceived through the eyes and heart of his colleagues. These are grieved by the prospects of losing their leader, for Tamburlaine is ill and dying. The dramatist, in a passage strikingly shorn of the usual array of mythological gods and goddesses, defines the place Tamburlaine occupies in relation to the heavens and to the enemies of those heavens. Once more, Marlowe tactfully plays down the concept of divinity connected with Tamburlaine. By using the word "heavens" instead of "God" or even "highest Jove", Marlowe presents the relationship which he is trying to establish between his hero and the powers divine on terms which are acceptable to his audience. Tamburlaine is explained as a source of pride and honour for these heavenly powers (2T. 5.3.12) and Tamburlaine is a man, "strangely" or usually blessed and governed by heaven (2T. 5.3.24-25), upon whose throne the "sacred virtues" have been poured (2T. 5.3.11). As the passage develops, Tamburlaine appears as more than a man upon whom the heavenly powers have lavished their attentions. He becomes "the honour" (2T. 5.3.28), the "footstool" (2T. 5.3.29) of heaven whose destruction will upset the power and structure of the spiritual world. The term "footstool" is strong if the Biblical sense is read into the word.[33] It literally makes of

---

33. There are two meanings attached to the Biblical word "footstool". It would seem that Marlowe, as he often does, has supposed the two senses in the one word. There is the sense developed in the text and substantiated by the following note: see p.528, n.34.But there is also the idea of using your enemy as a footstool, another prominent Biblical theme (see below, pp. 593 ff.) as Tamburlaine does Bajazet. Usumcasane says: "Blush heaven ... / To see thy foot-stoole set upon thy head": 2T. 5.3.28-29. If the "heavens" allow the infernal powers to take the life of Tamburlaine, then the "heavens" are no more the friend of Tamburlaine but his enemy upon whose head Tamburlaine, the "footstool" or the earthly presence of the heavens can tread or which he can use as a footstool in the same way that

(continued overleaf.....)

is a figure of the majesty of the highest Jove or the embodiment of "the power of heavens eternall majesty". The passage is not clear but the latter interpretation is possibly the closest to the truth about Marlowe's Tamburlaine. This interpretation is supported by other lines in the play.

Later in his career, Tamburlaine's view of himself as a divine agent is further confirmed. At the end of the play, the reader gets a final image of Tamburlaine as he is perceived through the eyes and heart of his colleagues. These are grieved by the prospects of losing their leader, for Tamburlaine is ill and dying. The dramatist, in a passage strikingly shorn of the usual array of mythological gods and goddesses, defines the place Tamburlaine occupies in relation to the heavens and to the enemies of those heavens. Once more, Marlowe tactfully plays down the concept of divinity connected with Tamburlaine. By using the word "heavens" instead of "God" or even "highest Jove", Marlowe presents the relationship which he is trying to establish between his hero and the powers divine on terms which are acceptable to his audience. Tamburlaine is explained as a source of pride and honour for these heavenly powers (2T. 5.3.12) and Tamburlaine is a man, "strangely" or usually blessed and governed by heaven (2T. 5.3.24-25), upon whose throne the "sacred virtues" have been poured (2T. 5.3.11). As the passage develops, Tamburlaine appears as more than a man upon whom the heavenly powers have lavished their attentions. He becomes "the honour" (2T. 5.3.28), the "footstool" (2T. 5.3.29) of heaven whose destruction will upset the power and structure of the spiritual world. The term "footstool" is strong if the Biblical sense is read into the word.[33] It literally makes of

---

33. There are two meanings attached to the Biblical word "footstool". It would seem that Marlowe, as he often does, has supposed the two senses in the one word. There is the sense developed in the text and substantiated by the following note: see p.528, n.34. But there is also the idea of using your enemy as a footstool, another prominent Biblical theme (see below, pp. 593 ff.) as Tamburlaine does Bajazet. Usumcasane says: "Blush heaven ... / To see thy foot-stoole set upon thy head": 2T. 5.3.28-29. If the "heavens" allow the infernal powers to take the life of Tamburlaine, then the "heavens" are no more the friend of Tamburlaine but his enemy upon whose head Tamburlaine, the "footstool" or the earthly presence of the heavens can tread or which he can use as a footstool in the same way that

(continued overleaf.....)

Tamburlaine a kind of temple or a place where the divine presence may rest or reside in the same way that the temple of Jerusalem was a footstool or a place where the God of Solomon was especially present [34] or that the earth is considered as the footstool of heaven.[35] In this context, Tamburlaine and God are close to being identical. This idea is confirmed by Usumcasane when, later in the same scene, he begs the heavenly powers to prove themselves greater than those assailing Tamburlaine's life: "let make them feel the strength of Tamburlaine, / Thy instrument and note of majesty" (2T 5.3.37-38). Tamburlaine is a "note" [36] of the majesty of heaven, "the distinguishing feature" or "sign" of God, or of "the immortal Jove", or of "heaven", as the case may be. Thus heaven and Tamburlaine become almost one. It is hardly surprising that Tamburlaine's colleagues transpose their leader's fight for life into a struggle between the forces of heaven and those of their enemies of the underworld.[37] Theridamas

---

33. Continued ..... a divine agent can treat his enemies. This line is more than a reminiscence of Psalm 100:1 as Ellis-Fermor would have it: see ed. cit., n. 31, p. 271, n. 29. It is another example of Marlowe's intricate structures which carry clusters of meanings at the same time, sometimes mutually excluding each other.

34. The word "footstool" is used in the sense of an "abode of God" in the following verse: "... I hadde in myne hart to buylde an house of rest, ... for the foote stoole of our God": B.V., 1 Chr. 28:2. See also B.V., G.V., Lam. 2:1; B.V., Lam. 2:1, n. (a) and G.V., Lam. 2:1, n. (c). In the last note the word is applied to the Ark of the Covenant as well.

35. For the use of the word as the earth being a place of rest or presence for the Lord, see B.V., G.V., Isa. 66:1; B.V., G.V., Matt. 5:35; B.V., G.V., Acts 7:49.

36. Ellis-Fermor relates the word "note" "with the force of the Latin nota, a distinguishing quality or mark": see ed. cit., n. 31, p. 272, n. Jump offers a similar explanation: a "distinguishing feature, sign": see ed. cit., n. 31, p. 186, n. The word as used by Marlowe possibly carries the idea of a much closer identification of Tamburlaine with God or heaven, or of the one being a visible sign or symbol of the other.

37. For suggestions of a conflict of this nature, see 2T 5.3.7-10, 32-36.

begs the heavens to save their glory: he says, "If he die, your glories are disgrac'd" (2T. 5.3.15). Usumcasane makes this plea his own (2T. 5.3.40). Techelles implores the same powers to "retaine desert of holinesse" (2T. 5.3.19), not to be inconstant or careless of their fame (2T. 5.3.21), not to tolerate the joys of the enemies at the overthrow of Tamburlaine (2T. 5.3.22-23). Usumcasane goes so far as to qualify the neglect of heaven as "basenesse" for sustaining "a shame of such inexcellence" (2T. 5.3.30-31). Tamburlaine's entity has grown into such proportions that the greatness of Marlowe's hero makes the greatness of the powers divine; the death of Tamburlaine becomes the defeat, the disgrace (2T. 5.3.40), and the shame of the heavens: "Blush heaven to loose the honor of thy name" (2T. 5.3.28). With the death of Tamburlaine, the heavens disappear and hell invades heaven and earth (2T. 5.3.16, 41). Weeping heavens (2T. 5.3.1.), falling stars (2T. 5.3.2),[38] "eternall clowdes" of "hell and darknesse" (2T. 5.3. 6-7) suggest the cataclysmic upheavals of the Book of Revelation describing the end of all times. Thus the dramatist has incorporated into his play a number of elements which unfailingly establish Tamburlaine as a very special agent, even as an image of God as his Scourge. While Tamburlaine's death may be an anti-climax to his career, the spiritual space with which he becomes involved through Marlowe's text serves to provide a climactic end to the growth of Tamburlaine as a divine agent, whether the growth be of his own or of God's making.

In the passage quoted above,[39] the emphasis is obviously laid on action. Tamburlaine "executes" tyrannies; he "exercises" a greater name or makes real the name in the measure that he acts in its capacity. He "must apply" to suit his actions to the name of "Scourge of God" which he holds. At the end of the play, Usumcasane describes Tamburlaine as the "instrument and note" of the majesty of God. The Biblical scourge was essentially an instrument at the dis-

---

38. The image of "falling stars" as a part of calamities to befall on humanity is a Biblical one: see B.V., Is. 34:4; B.V., Dan. 8:10. Man in great fear and in horrible troubles thinks that heaven and earth should perish: see G.V., Isa. 34:4, n. (o).

39. See above, p. 525.

posal of God for his own specific purposes. In this respect, Tamburlaine is faithful to the vocation of scourges as it was mapped out by his Biblical predecessors or scourges. He describes once more the kind of action which may be expected from a Scourge. "Terrors", "war's tyrannies", war, blood, death, cruelty: these are the deeds he feels he must perform simply to fit the terms of his "greater name", "the Scourge and Terror of the World". Very soon after proclaiming himself the Scourge of God (1T. 2.3.44-45), Tamburlaine begins to make clear the pattern of action he must follow. He must "think of nought but blood and war" (1T. 4.2.55). Later he teaches his sons (2T. 1.3.42 ff.) that, as scourges, the best reward symbolized by the crown of Persia (2T. 1.3.74 ff.) goes to the one who best "harbors revenge, war, death and cruelty" (2T. 1.3.78). These lines best summarize the code of martial ethics which Tamburlaine, whose honour "consists in sheading blood" (1T. 5.1.477), adopts as his own as the Scourge of God.

The passage quoted above imparts the idea that Tamburlaine is not free to make the duties of a good king his own. He is not even free to shirk those of inflicting death and cruelty, of exercising tyrannies of war expected of a scourge. While earlier in the play Tamburlaine could anticipate with relish and on his own terms the future encounter with the Turkish Orcanes as is obvious in the following lines:

> Such lavish will I make of Turkish blood,
> That Jove shall send his winged Messenger
> To bid me sheath my sword, and leave the field,
> (2T. 1.3.165-167)

that even the sun will be unable to sustain the sight (2T. 1.3.168), in the passage referred to, it is clear that Tamburlaine is compelled to act. He is enjoined from above to exercise war's justice. No deed of war, blood, death, and cruelty is ruled out from a mission of this kind. There are other lines in the play which reflect the obligation to act. Later, in the same scene, Tamburlaine reaffirms his determination to continue in this mission of scourging until, as he says:

> . . . . by vision, or by speach I heare
> Immortall Jove say, Cease my Tamburlaine.
> I will persist a terrour to the world.
> (2T. 4.1.198-200)

If Tamburlaine is enjoined by heaven, obviously, he is not free to interrupt this course of action before he is advised by the same source to do so. In all this, a constant determination sustained by a constant communication, possibly prophetic in nature, between God and his Scourge is implied. Although the expression "I will persist" could suggest that Tamburlaine's vocation as a Scourge could be more self- than divinely-appointed, nevertheless, the hero's words display a sense of obligation and a resolution to pursue his destiny which only a word from heaven could change. Finally, the same idea is put forth again by Tamburlaine. When he is about to throw the Koran and all the superstitious books of Babylon into the fire, he proclaims: "There is a God full of revenging Wrath, / ... / Whose Scourge I am, and him will I obey" (2T. 5.1.182,184).[40] Tamburlaine vows obedience to this God of Scourges.

This sense of divine direction and of imposition of will upon Tamburlaine made evident in all the above passages discussed is in keeping with the Biblical teaching about agents and scourges of God. They must act.[41] A slothful response to God's demands or neglect of duty in this respect are offences against God and liable to severe punishment.[42] In extreme situations, this obligation can even

---

40. This resolution could carry connotations of rejection of idolatry. In this respect, the Lord says, "But yf they wyl not obey, then wyl I ... destroy them": B.V., Jer. 12:17.

41. "If princes and iudges do not their duetie, God, whose autoritie is aboue them, wil take vengeance on them": G.V., Ps. 82:1, n. (a). "Gods vengeance is prepared against them, which dare not execute their duetie faithfully, ether for feare of man, or for anie other cause": G.V., Jer. 1:17, n. (q). "Euerie man in his vocation, as he is called first, oght to go forwarde and encourage others": G.V., Matt. 20:16, n. (d).

42. Moses is warned that he must obey the Angel sent by God: "Beware of him and heare his voyce and resist him not: for he wyl not spare you misdeedes, and my name is in hym": B.V., Exod. 23:21. If Israel refuses to go out and subdue the neighbouring nations, "Beholde, ye haue sinned against the Lorde and be sure you sinne wyl finde you out": B.V., Num. 32:23. God "sheweth what danger thei are in that haue autoritie, and resist not wickedness": G.V., Deut. 9:20, n. (l). Saul loses his lands and is chided by God in

(continued overleaf.....)

be a matter of life and death for the agent.[43] God repeatedly warns his ministers of vengeance, in the Bible, that they must obey;[44] the annotators dutifully echo this warning in the notes they add to the Biblical texts.[45] God's agents are frequently reminded that the guarantee to success is to be faithful to their calling[46] and to obey his dictates for God can become an enemy to those who neglect his laws and wishes. Perhaps, this sense of fidelity to his mission as Scourge is meant to be the driving force compelling Tamburlaine to pursue his scourging unceasingly throughout the play even after the major enemy Bajazet has fallen. His own personal survival is possibly at stake. If Marlowe meant Tamburlaine's resolution to obey the God of Scourges to be read in this context, as a guarantee to his own welfare, Tamburlaine's surprise when he is taken ill would be quite understandable. How could any God strike him who has been so assiduous, to the point of slaying his own son, in scourging lands and nations in every direction?

---

42. Continued ..... these words: "Because thou obeyedst not the voyce of the Lorde, nor executedst his fierce wrath vpon the Amalekites, therefore hath the lord donne this vnto thee this day": B.V., 1 Sam. 28:18. See also B.V., G.V., 1 Sam. 12:15. "Be not slouthful to goe and entre to possesse the lande": B.V., Judges 18:9.

43. "If they wil not obey, they shal passe by the sworde and perish ...": G.V., Job. 36:12.

44. See B.V., G.V., Deut. 4:30; 12:28. Israel is accused thus: "But ye haue not obeyed the voyce of the Lorde your God": B.V., Jer. 42:21.

45. "God would haue his voyce obeyed", notes the Biblical annotator about Moses's hesitations: see B.V., Exod. 4:14, n. (h). "God wyl be serued according to his worde": B.V., Deut. 4:2, n. (b). "God wil not be serued by halues, but wil haue ful obedience": G.V., Deut. 4:2, n. (c). See also G.V., Deut. 5:33, n. (m); B.V., Deut. 11:28, n. (k).

46. About Abraham's vocation, the annotator explains that "God wyl not forsake his: therefore they ought to goe forwarde in their vocation": B.V., Gen. 15:7, n.(f). Moses is similarly assured of success in delivering Israel from the Egyptians: "This certaine promisse of successe, should prouoke good magistrates to obeye gods callyng": B.V., Exod. 3:8, n. (c). God "sheweth that the true boldnes, and that whiche god approueth is ... walking constantly in the vocation, to whiche he hath called vs": B.V., Deut. 1:30, n. (g). See also G.V., Deut. 1:30, n. (s). Samson held that his vocation was to execute God's judgements upon the wicked: see G.V., Judges 16:28, n. (n).

Finally, according to the evidence in the above quotations and elsewhere in the play, Tamburlaine is expected to strike at the same evils as did the Biblical Scourge. While trying to exterminate the idolatrous Turks, Tamburlaine must destroy the proud,[47] those that "heaven abhors" (2T. 4.1.149) and those guilty of resisting in him the powers divine (2T. 4.1.157-158).[48] As a conclusion, one may affirm that Tamburlaine the Scourge is modelled on the Biblical scourges, in what he is, in what he does, and in what he scourges. It may be quite significant at this point to note that almost all the references drawn from the play to explain Tamburlaine's entity as a scourge are taken from the second part of Tamburlaine. Whereas, in the first part Marlowe has presented the hero

---

47. See 2T. 4.1.76-77, 148-149. So do Biblical scourges strike against pride, the source of all destruction: see B.V., G.V., Tobit 4:14. Biblical texts to that effect are numerous. God brings down the high looks of the proud: see B.V., Ps., T.H., 18:26 (B.V., C.P.T., and G.V., Ps. 18:27). See also B.V., H.T., and G.V., Ps. 101:5 (B.V., Ps., C.P.T., 101:7); B.V., Isa. 2:11; B.V., G.V., Isa. 5:15. Bajazet warns Tamburlaine: "Ambitious pride shall make thee fall as low" as himself: 1T. 4.2.76. This warning is basically a rewording of the following: "Pride goeth before destruction, and a high minde before the fal": B.V., Prov. 16:18. "Before destruction the hart of man is proude": B.V., Prov. 18:12. "After pryde commeth a falle": B.V.,Prov. 29:23. Or again, "A mans pride shal bryng hym lowe": B.V., Prov. 29:23, gloss. See also G.V., Prov. 29:23; B.V., G.V., Isa. 2:17; 10:33; 25:11; B.V., Dan. 4:37 (G.V., Dan 4:34). "The Lord abhorreth al suche as be of a proude hart": B.V., Prov. 16:5. "The Lord of hostes hath deuised this, to put downe the pride of al suche as be glorious, and to minishe al them that be proude vpon the earth": B.V., Isa. 23:9. See also G.V., Isa. 23:9. God condemns "an high looke, a proude hart": B.V., Prov. 21:4. See also G.V., Prov. 21:4; B.V., G.V., Isa. 2:12; G.V., Jer. 43:2 and n. (b); B.V., Dan. 4:17, n. (f). The following description would suit Tamburlaine: "The proud man is ... he that ... hath enlarged his desyre as the hel, and is as death, and can not be satisfied, but geathereth vnto him al nations, and heapeth vnto him al people": B.V., Hab. 2:5. God resists the proud: see B.V., Jas. 4:6. The "pryde of lyfe" defined as "ambition and pride" is of the world: see B.V., 1 John 2:16 and G.V., 1 John 2:16, n. (m). God detests ambition greatly: see G.V., Isa. 39:6, n. (e).

48. Tamburlaine's stand is an echo to some Biblical statements about resisting God. "There is no manne that canne resist thy Majestie, O Lorde": B.V., Esther 13:11. Holofernes's attitude towards his enemy is similar to Tamburlaine's; he slays whosoever resists him: see B.V., Judith 2:16. See also G.V., Ecclus. 3:27; B.V., Rom. 9:19; G.V., Rom. 11:25, n. (q); B.V., G.V., Rom. 13:2. The power of Tamburlaine could be supported by Paul's arguments to justify obedience to civil magistrates: "For no priuate man can contemne that gouernement which God hathe appointed without the breache of his conscience": G.V., Rom. 13:5,n. (b). See also B.V., Rom. 13:5, n. (a).

Tamburlaine as "Scourge and Wrath of God" in a very straightforward manner as he probably had found him in the accounts of the chroniclers, in the second part of the play, he takes pains to develop and explain the theme of Tamburlaine as the Scourge of God. Obviously, this was necessary in order that the cruelties which the dramatist had invented or drawn from sources other than the story of his hero might be made meaningful to the Elizabethans who, let it be said, were not alien to this mission of scourging their own society.

As may be expected, Tamburlaine, God's "instrument", displays traits of the God of which he is a "note" as well as of other instruments or scourges of the God of Israel. The Bible uses a special vocabulary[49] to describe this God exercising justice either directly or through chosen agents. Much is said about the "outstretched hand of God"[50] and the various meanings read into this gesture,[51]

---

49. One should not dismiss too hastily the importance of the Biblical phraseology pointed to in this paragraph. It was on such premises that a modern Biblical scholar established the common authorship of certain passages in the Bible. By means of a systematic analysis of the phrases particular to the Book of Deuteronomy, Moshe weinfeld was able to find, in other books of the Bible, texts which were probably penned by the same author or by the same group of authors: see Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School (Oxford, 1972), Appendix A, pp. 320-365. The Biblical phrases noted in this paragraph occur most frequently in the Book of Deuteronomy. It is possible that Marlowe may have been influenced by this particular Biblical style in writing this particular play on the Biblical theme of the scourge.

50. The phrase occurs frequently in the Biblical text. "And I wyl stretche out my hande and smite Egypt ...": B.V., Exod. 3:20. "I wyl ... deliuer you in a stretched out arme, and in great iudgementes": B.V., Exod. 6:6. "And the Egyptians shal knowe that i am the Lorde, when I stretche foorth my hande vpon Egypt, and bryng out the chyldren of Israel from among them": B.V., Exod. 7:5. See also B.V., G.V., Exod. 9:15. "God assayed to goe and take him a people from among nations ... by a stretched out arme, ...": B.V., G.V., Deut. 4:34. See also B.V., G.V., Deut. 5:15; 7:19; 9:29; 11:2; 26:8. Solomon praises God in the following words: "For they shal heare thy great name, and of thy mighty hand, and of thy stretched out arme": B.V., 1 Kgs. 8:42. "But feare the Lorde whiche brought you out of the lande of Egypt with great power, and a stretched out arme, him feare, and to hym bowe, and to hym doo sacrifice": B.V., 2 Kgs. 17:36. See also B.V., G.V., 2 Chr. 6:32; Ps. 126:12; B.V., Isa. 9:12; B.V., G.V., Isa. 9:17, 21; 10:4; Jer. 15:6; 21:5; 51:25; G.V., Lam. 2:4; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 25:7; G.V., Ezek. 25:13; B.V., G.V., Dan. 11:42; Zeph. 2:13; B.V., Baruch 2:11; etc.

51. This phrase, and its modified forms, occurs frequently in the Biblical text. It may express a destructive or a beneficial effect. The effects of God's "outstretched hand" are decidedly disastrous in B.V., G.V., Exod. 3:20. See also B.V., G.V., Exod. 9:15. "Thou stretchedst out thy ryght hande, the earth swalowed them": B.V., Exod. 15:12. See also B.V., G.V., 2 Kgs. 17:36;

(continued overleaf .....)

about "the mighty arm or hand of God";[52] about making the arms and hands of his agents mighty and strong[53] and about scourges being endowed with mighty arms and hands.[54] This kind of vocabulary is present in Tamburlaine, more so than in other Marlovian works, especially in the first part of the play. Jove stretches his hand from heaven to shield Tamburlaine from harm (1T. 1.2.180).[55] "The

---

51. Continued ..... G.V., Job. 1:11; 2:5. The wrath of God is not yet ceased but "yet his hande stretched out styl": B.V., Isa. 9:12. See also B.V., G.V., Isa. 9:17,21; 10:4; B.V., G.V., Jer. 15:6; 21:5; 51:25; G.V., Lam. 2:4; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 25:7; G.V., Ezek. 25:13; B.V., G.V., Dan. 11:42; Zeph. 2:13; Ezek. 6:14; 14:13; 20:33. On the other hand, the "outstretched hand of God" is a blessing in B.V., Exod. 6:6; 7:5; G.V., Isa. 65:2; Jer. 27:5; G.V., Jer. 32:17; B.V., G.V., Jer. 32:21; Ezek. 20:34; B.V., Zeph. 1:4; B.V., G.V., 4 Esdras 15:11; B.V., Baruch 2:11; etc.

52. This idea abounds in the Biblical text. "For through a mighty hande the Lord brought you from thence", meaning Egypt: B.V., Exod. 13:3. See also B.V., G.V., Exod. 13:14, 16; 32:11. "For in a mighty hande shal he let them goe, and in a mighty hande shal he dryue them out of the lande": B.V., Exod. 6:1. Israel is warned to remember "gods mighty hande agaynst rebellion": B.V., Num. 16:39, n. (c). "O Lorde God, thou hast begonne to shew thy seruaunt thy greatnesse, and thy myghty hande ...": B.V., Deut. 3:24. See also B.V., G.V., Deut. 4:34; 5:15; 6:21; 7:8,19; 9:26; 11:2; 26:8. "That al the people of the worlde may knowe the hande of the Lorde, how myghty it is, ...": B.V., Josh. 4:24. See also B.V., Josh. 11:1, n. (a). "Here they are forced to knowledge the true lyuing God, and his myghty hand: ...": B.V., 1 Sam. 6:5, n. (b). See also B.V., G.V., 1 Kgs. 8:42; G.V., 1 Chr. 16:30, n. (h); B.V., G.V., Neh. 1:10, Ps. 89:10; 136:12. For the same idea expressed in varied forms, see B.V., G.V., Ecclus. 36:3; B.V., G.V., Baruch 2:11. The good and the bad effects of God's hands are also evident. See also B.V., G.V., Ps. 20:6; B.V., Ps., T.H., 77:15; B.V., G.V., Ps. 89:13; B.V., Ps. 98:2 (G.V., Ps. 98:1); B.V., Jer. 32:21; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 20:33, 34; Dan. 9:15; B.V., 3 Esdras 8:48 (G.V., 3 Esdras 8:46); B.V., 3 Esdras 8:62 (G.V., 3 Esdras 8:60); B.V., G.V., 4 Esdras 15:11; etc. The Geneva Bible has a curious note about the meaning of the word "mighty" in connection with God. "When God wil shewe him self merciful to his Church, he calleth him self "The holie one of Israel"; but when he hathe to do with his enemies, he is called Mightie as against whome no power is able to resist": G.V., Isa. 1:24, n. (h).

53. "And the Lord sayd vnto Moses, "Stretche forth thyne hande vnto heauen, ...": B.V., Exod. 9:22. See also B.V., G.V., Exod. 10:21, 22; 14:16, 21, 26, 27; 15:12; etc.

54. The Bible says the following about Joseph: "And the armes of his handes were made strong by the handes of the myghty God of Israel ...": B.V., Gen. 49:24. See also G.V., Gen. 49:24. "And accordyng to al that myghty hande, ... whiche Moses shewed in the syght of al Israel": B.V., Deut. 34:12. "As soone as Josuah had stretched out his hande, ... they ... set the citie on fyre": B.V., Josh. 8:19; etc.

55. Jove's protection in Marlowe's play is very like that of the Biblical God. "God dooth defende the earth as it were with a shielde": B.V., Ps., C.P.V., 47:9. See also Ps. 59:16; 91:4; etc.

mighty hand of Tamburlaine" (1T. 2.5.3) wins crowns for Cosroe. After the defeat of Egypt, the Soldan exults: "Mighty hath God and Mahomet made thy hand" (1T. 5.1.479). In turn, as a favour to the Soldan, Zenocrate's father, Tamburlaine explains to what extent "shall his mighty arme extend" (1T. 5.1.521). The name of the Biblical God is to span the earth;[56] so are the names of his servants to be made great.[57] Each in his turn is magnified;[58] the fame of each servant is to spread over the earth. Tamburlaine is no exception. His fame grows from obscure beginnings to world renown. God's decrees are unconditional. So is the divine "I will" adopted by his scourges, by Tamburlaine in particular.[59] Under no circumstances are they to make any covenant or compromise with the defeated idolatrous nations,[60] nor are they even to negotiate ransoms to liberate their captives. Tamburlaine is faithful to this ruling. For no reason nor for any amount of wealth, will he change his "Martiall observations" (1T. 5.1.122).[61]

---

56. God is governor of all the world: see G.V., 2 Sam. 22:47, note (u). "They shal heare of thy great Name ...": G.V., 1 Kgs. 8:42. "Howe excellent great is thy name in al the earth": B.V., Ps., T.H., 8:8. See also B.V., C.P.V. and G.V. Ps. 8:9; B.V., G.V., Ps. 67:7; Mal. 1:11.

57. "And so the Lorde was with Josuah, and his fame was noysed throughout al landes": B.V., Josh. 6:27. "And he was famous through all the worlde": G.V., Josh. 6:27. God tells David: "And I ... haue made thee a great name, lyke vnto the name of the great menne that are in the earth": B.V., 2 Sam. 7:9. See also B.V., G.V., 1 Chr. 17:8. Of Solomon, the Bible says: "And his name was spoken of throughout al nations on euery syde": B.V., 1 Kgs. 4:31. "And the fame of Dauid went out into al landes, and the Lorde made al nations feare hym": B.V., 1 Chr. 14:17.

58. "And the Lord said unto Josuah, "This day wyl I beginne to magnifie thee in the syght of al Israel, that they may knowe, howe that as I was with Moses, so wyl I be with thee": B.V., Josh. 3:7. See also B.V., G.V., Josh. 4:14. "And Solomon ... waxed strong in his kingdome, and the Lorde his God was with hym, and magnified him in dignitie": B.V., 2 Chr. 1:1. See also B.V., G.V., Job 36:24.

59. "For "Will" and "Shall" best fitteth Tamburlaine": 1T. 3.3.41. See also above, p. 495 and n. 251.

60. "Thou shalt make no couenant with them, nor with their goddes": B.V., Exod. 23:32. See also B.V., G.V., Deut. 7:2.

61. Elihu asks the humiliated Job: "Thynkest thou that he wyl regarde thy richesse": B.V., Job 36:19. Tamburlaine asks the captive Bajazet: "Thinkst thou Tamburlain esteems thy gold?": 1T. 3.3.262.

His decrees are as sure and irrevocable as "wrathfull Planets, death, or destinie" (1T. 5.1.128), as unchanging as the laws of the Medes and the Persians, of whom he is the king, were reputed to be.[62] Zenocrate and her train, Bajazet, the Damascenes, the Babylonians, all plea in vain for their liberty, or for their lives, or for both. As was the case for their fellow-captives of the Bible, no amount of riches can seduce the victor and save the vanquished.[63] God is merciless towards the enemy; so should his scourges be; so is Tamburlaine. He is deaf to the recriminations of all his victims. Furthermore, God strikes terror into the hearts of them he means to subdue or exterminate.[64] God imparts some of this terror to his agents.[65] Through God's action, the enemy becomes faint-hearted and weak and falls before the scourges.[66] The same phenomenon occurs in the fall

---

62. "Nowe, O kyng, confyrme the decree, and seale the writyng that it be not changed accordyng to the lawe of the Medes and Persians, whiche altereth not": B.V., Dan. 6:8. See also B.V., Dan. 6:12, 15. The Biblical annotator comments on this character of the Medes and the Persians in this way: "Thus the wicked mainteine yl lawes by constancy and aucthoritie, whiche is oft tymes, eyther lyghtnes or stubbernes, when as the inncoentes therby perish: ...": B.V., Dan. 6:15, n. (c). See also G.V., Dan. 6:15. n. (f). This would especially be true of Tamburlaine when he confirms his decision to execute all the Damascenes. This attitude suggests a kind of godly power and character to his decrees for, like God, he can say, "I am the Lord, I change not": B.V., G.V., Mal. 3:6.

63. See above, p. 536 and notes 60, 61.

64. "The feare of God fel vpon the cities that were rounde about them ...": B.V., Gen. 35:5. "Feare and dread shal fal vpon them ...": B.V., Exod. 15:16. "I wil send my feare before thee, ... and I wil make all thine enemies turne their backes vnto thee": G.V., Exod. 23:27. "I wil make them afraid at thy comming":G.V.,Exod.23:27,n.(p)."This day wyl I beginne to sende the feare and dread of thee vpon al nations that are vnder al the heauen, so that they, whiche heare speake of thee, shal tremble and quake before thee": B.V., Deut. 2:25. "This declareth that the heartes of men are in Gods hands ether to be made faint or bolde": G.V., Deut. 2:25, n. (l). See also B.V., G.V., Deut. 11:25; Josh. 4:24; 1 Sam. 11:7; 1 Kgs. 8:43; 1 Chr. 16:25, 30; Ps. 67:7; B.V., and G.V., Ps. 99:3; etc.

65. By signs and wonders, Moses "was assured that he should be fearful to others, though he were but contemptible in the worlde": B.V., Exod. 4:3, n. (b).

66. "Theyr hartes faynted for feare, and there was no spirite in them any more, for the presence of the chyldren of Israel": B.V., Josh. 5:1. "I knowe that the Lord hath geuen you the lande: for the feare of you is fallen vpon vs and the inhabitantes of the land faint at the presence of you": B.V., Josh. 2:9. See also B.V., G.V., Josh 2:11, 24; 5:1. "And they feared him as they feared Moses al dayes of his lyfe": B.V., Josh. 4:14. "Let al the earth feare hym ...": B.V., 1 Chr. 16:30. "Tremble ye before him, all the earth: ...": G.V., 1 Chr. 16:30. Tamburlaine inspires fear in the same way that Israel did.

of Damascus and of Babylon. The Damascenes are a typical example. Tamburlaine boasts: "They walke quivering on their citie walles, / Halfe dead for feare before they feele my wrath" (1T. 4.4.3-4). So are the inmates of Babylon. All stand in dread of what Tamburlaine holds in store for them. Fear pervades the world of the Scourge of God[67] as it does that of the God of Scourges.

The effects of the wrath of God in terms of destruction have been noted. Although very similar in nature, nevertheless, the destructive powers displayed by the agents of God's wrath deserve at least a passing attention. The Biblical warriors, in general, belong more properly to the category of epic heroes than to that of famous historical characters however great these might be. They are of a formidable gigantic dimension made to cope with gigantic tasks. They embody superhuman forces at work, forces outside of and greater than themselves. As these forces materialize so some degree in concrete characters and episodes, a purpose greater than either the persons or the events involved is being fulfilled. For these reasons, there is a kind of timeless quality about the Biblical heroes. While they tread the hills and vales of this earth leaving behind them the imprints of the Wrath of God, a plan of another order, the divine one, is gradually carried out. Because of their character and of the purpose they fulfil, these Biblical warriors are fearless regardless of the odds. Wherever they are, they face, conquer, and subdue armies and nations, more often than not,

---

67. Fear and terror decidedly pervade the play. Tamburlaine prides himself in being "the terrour to the world": see 1T. 1.2.38; 3.3.45; 4.2.32; 2T 4.1.155, 200; 5.3.45. His whole being emanates fear and terror; his name (see 1T. 5.1.176), his looks (see 1T. 4.1.13; 2T 1.3.139; 3.5.119; 5.1.23; 5.3.107), his eyes (see 1T. 4.1.14), even his tents (see 1T. 5.1.71-72) strike terror among the enemy. The Damascenes are half-dead for fear even before Tamburlaine strikes (see 1T. 4.4.4); the Virgins' minds are "thicke and mistie" (see 1T. 5.1.110) with fear; the Turks fly for fear (see 2T. 5.3.115); Jove looks pale and wan (see 1T. 5.1.452), and the ugly monster death is shaking and quivering for fear (see 2T. 5.3.67-68); the whole world quakes with fear (see 2T. 1.3.139). Tamburlaine's world is conditioned and determined by the terror he inspires.

greater than themselves in resources and experience. In the measure that these Biblical scourges function in harmony with God's plans they invariably meet with success. Triumph for themselves and defeat for the enemy is the general rule. Wherever the forces of the Biblical scourges tread, the nations before them are defeated, consumed, and wiped out. They leave behind them scenes of desolation and ruin. On the express command of the God of Scourges or as a part of the plan laid out by the scourge himself, cities go up in flames, the inhabitants are slaughtered "as one man" so that none escape. Whether the scourge is one of the more prominent figures of the history of Israel or one of the lesser characters, the scene they create is one of utter destruction, of total or large-scale slaughter, and of burning ruins.

In keeping with the heroic deeds of an epic nature, the Biblical language often tends to be hyperbolic in character. It rarely provides many details. The author of these Biblical tales refrains from including definitive traits which would particularize incidents or the individuals involved. Because these incidents are meaningful only by the part they play in the overall plan, only the bare essential points are made. For the same reason, the heroes are somewhat faceless. The episodes are broadly sketched, the emphasis being placed on the destruction achieved; the characters appear more as functional presences largely absorbed by and identified with the task or mission to be accomplished. The result is a series of episodes, each very similar to the others, repetitious in nature and effect while the leaders of these episodes are fashioned according to the pattern of the Biblical scourge, devoid of individualizing and humanizing characteristics.

The above remarks about the scourges and their deeds and about the style used to describe them, seem applicable to Tamburlaine. Indeed, the plot of Marlowe's play has been labelled as episodic, repetitious, lacking the interplay between the characters which constitutes an essential part of a good drama. The play is in reality a series of episodes which are not woven into a closely knit plot but which appear loosely connected one to the other, the presence of

Tamburlaine being the single element of unity of the whole play. The episodes are repetitious in the sense that they almost all bear the mark of war and cruelty. In addition to this, Marlovian scholars have found that the plot of the second part of the play parallels that of the first part. As for the characters, they are less principles of action then presences. Critics have deplored the fact that Marlowe's characters fail to reveal what they are as persons. They are not caught up in crises which would force them to draw upon their own resources in order to extricate themselves. They, especially the hero, rather appear as personified ideas or forces working their way through a network of other ideas, the strongest of these dominating the play. This trait of Marlowe's play should perhaps be attributed more to the influence of the Biblical text from which he possibly drew most of his inspiration about Biblical scourges than to his lack of experience as a dramatist.

The hyperbolic expressions used in the Bible in connection with war possibly merit more attention. The Biblical author writes of hosts covering the face of the earth,[68] spreading over the land like the cloud of a storm,[69] all over the high mountains and all the high hills,[70] of armies rising up from the north like a great flood overflowing the banks of all the rivers,[71] of troops so huge

---

68. The prophecy against Egypt is formulated in these terms: "I will goe vp and wyl couer the earth, ...": B.V., Jer. 46:8. This kind of hyperbolic style is also used to describe the people of Israel in Egypt at the time of Joseph: "Beholde, there is a people comme out of Egypt, and beholde they couer the face of the earth, ...": B.V., Num. 22:5.

69. The prophecy telling of the future invasion of Palestine by armies from the north is worded as follows: "Thou shalt ascende and comme vp lyke a storme, as a cloude to couer the lande, shalt thou be ...": B.V., Ezek. 38:9. See also B.V., G.V., Ezek. 38:16.

70. The Lord through the medium of Isaiah answers Sennacherib's blasphemous message in these words: "I wyl couer the hye mountaynes and sydes of Libanus with my horsemen, ...": B.V., Isa. 37:24.

71. Concerning the overthrow of Damascus and Samaria, the prophet says: "Beholde, the Lorde shal bryng myghtie and great fluddes of water vpon them, namely the king of the Assyrians with al his power, whiche shal climbe vp vpon al his fluddes, and runne ouer al his bankes": B.V., Isa. 8:7. See also G.V., Isa. 8:7. The same kind of hyperbole is used in the prophecy against Philistia and Samaria: "Beholde, there shal waters aryse out of the north,

(continued overleaf.....)

that they would fill the land from the Persian to the Mediterranean Sea.[72] The prophets speak of laying up engines of war against the gates of cities,[73] of the shaking of the earth at the noise of armies,[74] or of armies drinking up the rivers dry.[75] Carnage and bloodshed spread over the world, from one end of the earth to the other.[76] Mountains, hills, valleys, and rivers are filled with the slain.[77] Horsemen stumble over the heaps of carcasses.[78] The very hills and the mountains are wet with the blood of the enemy;[79] the land is thoroughly soaked,[80] full to overflowing with the blood of the victims, as the Nile overflows

---

71. Continued..... and shal growe to a great fludde, runnyng ouer, and couering the land and al that is therein, the cities and them that dwelle therein: ...": B.V., Jer. 47:2. See also G.V., Jer. 47:2. The flood in this case is the army of the Chaldeans: see G.V., Jer. 47:2, n. (b).

72. See G.V., Joel 2:20, n. (o).

73. The divination for Jerusalem was among other counsels, "to lay engines of warre against the gates, to cast a mount, ...": G.V., Ezek. 21:22.

74. "The earth shook at the noise of the armies": 1 Macc. 9:13. So shall it quake at the noise of the fall of the enemy: see B.V., G.V., Jer. 49:21.

75. This mode of expression is used in Isaiah: "I wyl drye vp the fluddes to become Ilandes, and drinke vp the riuers": B.V., Isa. 42:15. The idea recurs again: see B.V., G.V., Ezek. 30:12. In his answer to Sennacherib's blasphemous message, the Lord through his prophet Isaiah says the following about his armies: "... with the plant of my fete, haue I dryed all the riuers closed in": G.V., Isa. 37:25. The annotator explains this passage as follows: "His armie is so great, that it is able to drye vp whole riuers ...": G.V., Isa. 37:25, n. (q).

76. With regards to the fate of Babylon, the prophet says the following: "And the same day shal the Lorde hym selfe slay them from one ende of the earth to another": B.V., Jer. 25:33. Through the warfare carried on by scourges, "the sworde of the Lord shall deuoure from the one end of the land, euen to the other end of the land: no flesh shal haue peace": G.V., Jer. 12:12. See also B.V., Jer. 12:12.

77. Ezekiel's prophecy against Edom contains this passage: "His mountaynes wyl I fyl with his slayne menne, thy hylles, valleys, and al thy riuers, the slayne with the swoorde shal fal in them": B.V., Ezek. 35:8. See also B.V., G.V., Ps. 110:6. Speaking of Egypt, the God of Israel says he will "fil the valleys with thy highnesse", the last word being explained as follows: "With the heapes of the carkases of thyne enimies": B.V., Ezek. 32:5 and n. (d). It may be noted that Tamburlaine is drawn into Babylon by his harnessed kings "on heaps of carkasses": see 2T. 5.1.72.

78. See B.V., G.V., Nah. 3:3.

79. Speaking of the future enemies of Israel, Isaiah says: "The very hilles shalbe wet with the blood of them": B.V., Isa. 34:3. The Geneva Bible uses "mountaines" instead of "hilles".

80. "Theyr land shalbe throughly soked with blood": B.V., Isa. 34:7. See also B.V., G.V., Ezek. 9:9.

Egypt.[81] The prophet foresees that the foot of the righteous or of the scourge shall be dipped in the blood of a great slaughter,[82] or shall be washed in the blood of the wicked,[83] so great shall the carnage be.[84] The Book of Revelation speaks of an effusion of blood so great that it shall rise up to the horse's bridle.[85] The prophet foretells how victims shall shed their blood like streams of water.[86] This figurative language is enhanced by the frequent references made to the Egyptian plague (and what is war but a plague) by which rivers and floods were turned into blood.[87] Slaughter is painted in terms of an ever insatiate hunger and thirst.[88] The swords of the fighters devour the flesh of the enemy, eating of him as of a prey.[89] The swords and arrows themselves are bathed

---

81. Ezekiel addresses these words to the Pharaoh of Egypt: "I wyl water thyne ouerflowing lande with thy blood, euen to the mountaynes, and the riuers shalbe ful of thee": B.V., Ezek. 32:6. The annotator paraphrases the verse as follows: "As Nilus ouerfloweth Egypt, so wil I make the blood of thyne hoast to ouerflowe it": B.V., Ezek. 32:6, n. (c). See also G.V., Ezek. 32:6, n. (e). The Geneva Bible offers the same verse in this version which the modern edition has preserved: "I wil also water with thy blood the land wherein thou swimmest ... ": G.V., Ezek. 32:6. This version suggests the notion of swimming in blood, an idea which Marlowe uses: see 2T 1.3.89. "Their land shall be thoroughly soaked with blood": B.V., Isa. 34:7.

82. "That thy foote may be dypped in the blood of thine enimies": B.V., Ps., T.H., 68:23. See also B.V., Ps. C.P.V., 68:23 and G.V., Ps. 68:23. This is explained as "in the blood of that great slaughter": G.V., Ps. 68:23, n. (r).

83. "He shal wash his fete in the blood of the wicked": G.V., Ps. 58:10. See also B.V., Ps. 58:10.

84. "Their punishment and slaughter shalbe so great": G.V., Ps. 58:10, n. (i).

85. See Rev. 14:20.

86. "They have shead their blood like water on euery side of Hierusalem": B.V., Ps. T.H., 79:3. See also B.V., Ps., C.P.V., 79:3. The second Book of the Maccabees speaks of a lake of blood: see 2 Macc. 12:16.

87. See B.V., G.V., Ps. 78:44; 105:29. See also B.V., G.V., Isa. 15:9.

88. "Their land shalbe dronken with blood": G.V., Isa. 34:7.

89. "He shal eat the nations his enimies": B.V., Num. 24:8. "Thou art an eater vp of menne": B.V., Ezek. 36:13.

in blood and are drunk with the blood of the fallen.[90] Extermination is described in monstrous proportions. Armies eat and swallow up other armies;[91] even the earth opens up to swallow undesirable characters.[92] Does Marlowe make use of this sort of hyperbolic imagery?

A similar kind of imagery may be found in the play, not necessarily quoted literally from the Bible but suggesting similar proportions of gigantic warfare and large-scale slaughter. This imagery is used in connection with the hero as well as with other characters in the play. Before his engagement with Tamburlaine, Bajazet confidently estimates that he has "of Turkes, Arabians, Moores and Jewes / Enough to cover all Bythinia" (1T. 3.3.136-137), and, therefore, more than enough to defeat Tamburlaine. Later in the play, Callapine boasts that his "royal army" from "the bounds of Phrigia to the sea / Which washeth Cyprus with his brinish waves, / Covers the hils, the valleies and the plaines" (2T. 3.5.10,11-13). The armies of Tamburlaine, who defeats both of those leaders, may supposedly be even larger unless one remembers that the few led by the Scourge of God often could defeat the many. The sea which washes Cyprus is the Mediterranean; is Phrygia so very far geographically from Persia?[93] In a context of hyperbolic dimensions, is the army which extends from the boundary of Phrygia to the Mediterranean very different in size from the Biblical one which covers the land from the Persian to the Mediterranean Sea? The image of vast numbers is present in both the Bible and the play and is not unsimilar.

---

90. "I wyl make myne arrowes drunke with blood, and my sworde shal deuour fleashe, ...": B.V., Deut. 32:42. "The swoorde shal deuoure, it shalbe satisfied and bathed in theyr blood, for the Lord God of hostes shal haue a slayne offeryng towarde the north, by the water of Euphrates": B.V., Jer. 46:10. See also G.V., Jer. 46:10.

91. Speaking of Nabuchadnezzar, Jeremiah says: " He swallowed me vp like a dragon": B.V., Jer. 51:34. See also B.V., Ps. 124:2 (G.V., Ps. 124:3).

92. See B.V., G.V., Num. 16:30, 32; G.V., Num. 17:23, n. (f); B.V., G.V., Num. 26:10; Deut. 11:6; etc. This Biblical image recurs in several passages: "Let vs swallowe them vp like the graue quicke and whole": B.V., Prov., 1:12, and n. (l). See also B.V., G.V., Ps. 106:17.

93. Phrygia was an ancient inland country located in the western part of Asia Minor; Persia or Iran is in the Western part of Central Asia.

Tamburlaine also has his engines of war. He "will with Engines, never exercisde, / Conquer, sacke, and utterly consume" (2T. 4.1.191-192)[94] the cities and palaces of the Turks. Has the term "engine" found its way into Marlowe's text from the Geneva Bible or was it a common word of the sixteenth-century military vocabulary? While Tamburlaine is teaching his sons about the values of warfare, Celebinus wins the approval of his father by his plans to "martch with such a multitude of men, / As all the world shall tremble at their view" (2T. 1.3.56-57). This idea is not quite that of the earth shaking with the noise of multitudes engaged in warfare as in the Biblical text, but, nevertheless, it includes visions of vast numbers. The allusion to armies drinking rivers dry is used by Marlowe. He speaks of "The host of Xerxes, which by fame is said / To drinke the mightie Parthian Araris". (1T. 2.3.15-16).[95] The allusion is believed to come from the ancient Greek historian Herodotus but some critics detect influences in Marlowe's thought to have intervened between the text of the historian and his own in the play.[96] The Biblical text might have been one of these influences. Orcanes, who is planning to march against Tamburlaine, assesses the size of his army. It "being a handfull to a mighty hoste" (2T. 3.1.40) is thought to be "in number yet sufficient, / To drinke the river Nile or Euphrates./ And for their power, ynow to win the world" (2T. 3.1.41-43). What might have been the size of the troops of Tamburlaine who eventually defeated Orcanes?

The scope and extent of bloodshed alluded to in the play is of gigantic proportions. Did Marlowe draw his inspiration from the Biblical text? According to Zenocrate's remarks, confusion seems to have reigned during the slaughter of

---

94. See above, p. 541 and n. 73.

95. See above, p. 541 and n. 75.

96. Xerxes, king of Persia, is known to have invaded Greece with a huge army and was defeated at Salamis in 480 B.C. Jump says the legend which Marlowe used to illustrate the size of the Persian army was fairly widely known: see Jump, ed. cit., n. 31, p. 30, n. Both Ellis-Fermor and Jump believe Marlowe may have read the tale in Herodotus (vii.21): see Ellis-Fermor, ed. cit., n. 31, p. 100, n. and Jump, ibid. But "even so", writes Ellis-Fermor, "some version has intervened between Marlowe and Herodotus here, supplying the more fabulous accompaniments": see ibid.

the Damascenes, especially of the Virgins of Damascus. The horses themselves seem to have been overcome with revulsion by the massacre of the Virgins. The dramatist mentions Tartarian steeds stamping on others with their thundering hooves (1T. 5.1.330-331), checking the ground, reining themselves (1T. 5.1.333). This scene is not so very different from that of the horses stumbling over dead bodies, as described by the prophet Nahum.[97] The hills and the mountains might not be wet with the blood of the slain, yet, Tamburlaine tells his sons his royal chair will be drawn " in a field whose superficies / Is covered with a liquid purple veile, / And sprinkled with the braines of slaughtered men" (2T. 1.3.79-81).[98] Tamburlaine's words are a proper echo to those of Orcanes who contemplates fighting him. Orcanes boasts that "Our Turky blades shal glide through al their throats, / And make this champion mead a bloody Fen" (2T. 1.1.31-32). Notions of floods of blood, of washing in blood as in water, as found in the Biblical text have been noted.[99] The Marlovian vocabulary of the play describes bloodshed in terms of rivers and seas of blood or of a deluge of blood covering the land. Such ideas and expressions occur more frequently in the second part of the play than in the first. As a matter of fact, the only expression of its kind in the first part of the play mentions war and bloodshed as an evil which was averted. Tamburlaine explains that were it not for the pacifying influence of Zenocrate, the "furie of [his] sword" would have "ere this bin bathde in streames of blood, / As vast and deep as Euphrates or Nile" (1T. 5.1.437,438-439). However, in the second part of the play, Orcanes boasts that the "Danubius stream that runs to Trebizon. / Shall carie wrapt within his scarlet waves, / ... / The slaughtered bodies of these Christians" (2T. 1.1.33-34, 36). As Orcane's enthusiasm grows in the course of his speech, so does the proportion of bloodshed of his anticipated warfare increase: "The Terrene main wherin Danubius fals, / Shall by this battell be the bloody Sea" (2T. 1.1.37-38). The slain bodies of the Christians shall turn the

---

97. See Nah. 3:3. See above, p. 541.

98. See above, p. 541 and notes 79, 80.

99. See above, pp. 541-542 and p. 542, notes 81, 86.

Danube into a river of blood which in turn will transform the Mediterranean into a "bloody sea". This image of bloodshed could hardly be more exaggerated. Quite normally, Marlowe's hero will not be outdone anymore in words than he is in deeds. The most eloquent scene in this respect is that of the teaching of warfare. Pools and seas of blood are in order; they recall the apocalyptic effusion of blood. The throne, emblem of the power of the royal scourge, is set "in a sea of blood" (2T. 1.3.89). Bloodshed grows to absurd proportions. Those aspiring to that "royal seat" must be ready to "armed wade up to the chin in blood" (2T. 1.3.84), or to "prepare a ship and saile to it" (2T. 1.3.90) in blood, or to "strive to swim through pooles of blood" (2T. 1.3.92)[100] to reach it. Vistas of a universal blood bath open up in these lines as a normal setting for the activities of a scourge. In the meantime, Tamburlaine's sons must be content to wash all their hands at once in the blood of his self-inflicted wound (2T. 3.2.127).[101] Tamburlaine who, early in the play, was the scourge who "must his kindled wrath bee quencht with blood, / Not sparing any that can manage armes" (1T. 4.1.56-57) is spoken of at the end of his career as "The monster that hath drunk a sea of blood, / And yet gapes still for more to quench his thirst" (2T. 5.2.13-14). He must be mourned by nothing less than "hearts all drowned in tears of blood" (2T. 5.3. 214). Tamburlaine, in his warfare, is driven by an insatiable thirst for blood, apocalyptic in dimension.

Images of hunger and thirst are again used elsewhere throughout the play to illustrate warfare. Bajazet urges his followers to war in these words: "Let us glut out swords / That thirst to drinke the feble Perseans blood" (1T. 3.3.164-165)[102]

---

100. For the idea of swimming in blood, see above, pp. 541-542 and p. 542, n. 81.

101. The idea of washing hands as a symbol of recovering innocence appears in the Psalms. "I have washed my handes in innocencie": B.V., Ps., T.H., 26:6. See also B.V., C.P.V., and G.V., Ps. 26:6; B.V., G.V., Ps. 73:13. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquitie": G.V., Ps. 51:2. "Christ ... washed vs from our sinnes in his blood": G.V., Rev. 1:5.

102. See above, pp. 542-543 and p. 543, n. 90.

Tamburlaine's in this case. The Turkish Gazellus hopes to draw a peace treaty with the Christians for, he says: "We are all glutted with the Christians blood" (2T. 1.1.14).[103] As in the Bible,[104] victories or defeats are spoken of as swallowing the enemy. Bajazet predicts: "Your threefold armie and my hugie hoste, / Shall swallow up these base borne Perseans" (1T. 3.3.94-95). Later Orcanes explains that he has armies enough "to swallow forcelesse Sigismond" (2T. 1.1.65). The captive Bajazet wishes the earth would swallow him and Zabina at once (1T. 4.2.29); in the same vein, Tamburlaine opens the prospects of tortures to come for the treacherous Almeda. He tells him: "I'll make thee wish the earth had swallowed thee" (2T. 3.5.118).

What is to be concluded from the above remarks? Did Marlowe use Biblical imagery? If so, did he draw this imagery from the Biblical text or from the Biblical idiom as it was reflected in the common usage of the language of the times? Or are the passages mentioned above simply couched in conventional language used to describe war, slaughter, and bloodshed? One must be reminded again that the thought central to the play is the action of Tamburlaine as a scourge, that the theme of the scourge is essentially a Biblical one and that, consequently, one would normally expect some of the expressions used to describe the hero and his activities to reflect that of the Biblical theme of the scourge. The idea that Marlowe might have used Biblical imagery in his play might be supported by the fact that certain traits in his characters suggest those of the Biblical scourges. Even though there is the possibility that many of these traits imply analogies rather than straightforward resemblances, nevertheless, these traits might help to outline the true Tamburlaine as a Scourge.

The work of the scourges of God is certainly one, if not the, dominant theme of the Old Testament. Its chapters relate the careers of the successive war heroes and conquerors who, as scourges of God, destroyed and killed on every side. The

---

103. See above, p. 542 and n. 88.

104. See above, pp. 542-543 and p. 543, notes 91, 92.

destruction of Damascus, Jerusalem, Babylon and all the other cities, whose major crime was that they represented a threat to the spiritual survival of Israel as a chosen people, takes up a large proportion of the Biblical text. Its chapters tell of the defeat of Assyria and of Egypt and its allies. If one removes Jerusalem and Assyria from the list, the remaining series of destructive campaigns amazingly corresponds to and sums up the career of Tamburlaine. For some reason, Marlowe has chosen material among the selections which the chroniclers of Tamburlaine's life had already made. Furthermore, he has given the series of Tamburlaine's conquests a new pattern which is not present in the accounts he probably read. Obviously Marlowe chose to initiate Tamburlaine's career as a scourging monarch with the destruction of Damascus and, of his own invention, to make the fall of Babylon the climax to his hero's military campaigns. Because these places occupy a prominent place in the history of Israel, Marlowe's pattern is probably inspired by and meant to convey special Biblical connotations. If this is true, these Biblical connotations are probably sustained by other elements drawn from the same source. The transformation of the historical facts about Timur into the portrait of the Tamerlane-hero as it appears in the chronicles suggests that Christian or Biblical influences had been at work. Marlowe probably meant to preserve the traces of these influences and possibly to add more of his own. The history of the defeat of Egypt and the destruction of Damascus and Babylon in the Bible extended over many generations. Many Biblical personalities, too numerous to enumerate them all here, had been involved in these events. Marlowe might have selected specific points in these Biblical careers and telescoped them into the career of one man, Tamburlaine. A study of these points might shed light on the mission of Marlowe's hero.

Tamburlaine appears in the play as a shepherd as were Joseph, Moses, David, Cyrus, and several other characters in the Bible. Like these, Tamburlaine rises to the heights of political power. In fact, Tamburlaine accedes to the throne of Persia, a throne which was held by great conquerors of antiquity, by Cyrus, the founder of the Persian empire, and by his successors Darius and Xerxes. All of

these are mentioned in the play,[105] either by the present Persian Lords or by Tamburlaine himself who, early in his career, already claims to have a military power superior to that of Xerxes. Tamburlaine's accession to the Persian throne, in itself, promotes him to the prestige enjoyed by these great Persian monarchs who had fashioned the world of their day. Like Alexander (2T. 5.1.69), Tamburlaine plans to become another great conqueror of the Eastern world (2T. 5.1.69). Like Belus, Ninus, and, one may add, the greatest of them all Nabuchadnezzar, Tamburlaine conquers and rules Babylon. Like Joshua, David, Judas Maccabeus, and others, Tamburlaine is a great warrior, scourging cities and kingdoms supposedly at God's command. Like Nebuchadnezzar, Tamburlaine dies as a scourge scourged. Thus Tamburlaine's career parallels those of the great historical characters who each had a special part to play in the history of Israel.

Indeed, Tambulaine bears many points of resemblance, either in himself or in his action, to one or the other of the Biblical heroes, good or bad. Like Joseph, Saul, David, and others,[106] Tamburlaine is well-favoured in appearance, a trait which made him especially apt for his role as king according to Biblical standards.[107] Like Joseph, Tamburlaine is not ashamed of his humble origins.[108] Both easily admit before the Egyptians, disdainful of shepherds,[109] that they come from a base pastoral

---

105. 1T. 1.1.130; 1T. 1.1.153 and 1T. 2.3.15.

106. For Absalom's beauty, see B.V., G.V., 2 Sam. 14:25. See also above, pp.489-490.

107. See 1T. 2.1.7-30 especially lines 29-30.

108. Joseph "was not ashamed of his father and kinred, thogh thei were of basse condition": G.V., Gen. 46:32, n. (e). See also G.V., Gen., 46:34, n. (n). Tamburlaine refers to himself as "a shepheard by my Parentage": 1T. 1.2.35. He judges his social status to be a "meane estate": 1T. 1.2.202. The Biblical annotator adds that "the godly are not ashamed of the basenesse of their occupation, so it be lawful": B.V., Gen. 47:3, n. (b). In this perspective, Tamburlaine is to be praised for his honesty.

109. "For euery one that kepeth cattel, is an abomination vnto the Egyptians": B.V., Gen. 46:34. The Geneva Bible has "Shepekeper" instead: see G.V., Gen. 46:34. Marlowe has twice noted Zenocrate's disdain for Tamburlaine, the first time in the question which undoubtedly reflects her attitude towards him: "Disdaines Zenocrate to live with me?": 1T. 1.2.82. The second time, the remark is made by Zenocrate herself. She admits Tamburlaine's love for her has changed her feelings for him "It hath chang'd my first conceiv'd disdaine": 1T. 3.2.12.

background. Like Joseph, Tamburlaine does not let his private affections have any sway over his course of action as a political leader and scourge. Joseph did not allow his natural feelings to determine the attitude he though he should have towards his brothers when they c me to him in Egypt;[110] neither does Tamburlaine let his love for Zenocrate alter his decisions with respect to the slaughter of the Damascenes. Tamburlaine spares only her father, probably first and foremost for his own private interests. Neither does Tamburlaine allow his paternal love for Calyphas to interfere with his judgment as a Scourge. Like Moses, who had been taught by God himself that no personal interests, not even one's own life, must be spared in face of the evil of idolatry,[111] so is Tamburlaine ready to sacrifice his son to save his honour as a warrior, as a God of war, and as a Scourge of God.[112] One must say that Tamburlaine had Biblical models to imitate in this deed of extreme cruelty. Besides the Abrahamic sacrificial episode in which Isaac nearly loses his life,[113] there was Jephthah who did not hesitate to sacrifice his daughter to keep a vow made to God.[114] There was also Mesa, a king of Israel, who, like Tamburlaine, incurred severe criticism upon himself for having sacrificed his son to pacify his own gods.[115] Like Tamburlaine's colleagues, "the Israelites were greatly offended because of the crueltie of the facte".[116] Like Mesa, Tamburlaine was possibly sacrificing his son primarily to pacify his

---

110. Joseph "wyl doo nothing as of priuate affection, though his authoritie were great": B.V., Gen. 46:31, n. (m).

111. God instructs Moses that neither brother, son, daughter, wife or friend must be spared of their lives if found guilty of idol worship or of enticing others to the same: see Deut. 13:6-8. They must be killed. "But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, ...": Deut. 13:9. For, says the Biblical annotator, "Gods glorie must be preserued before natural affection": B.V., Deut. 13:6, n. (e). Or, again, "Al natural affections must giue place to Gods honour": G.V., Deut 13:6, n. (e).

112. See 2T. 4.1.91 ff. For an analysis of this scene, see above, pp. 412 ff.

113. See Gen. 22:1-14.

114. See B.V., G.V., Judges 11:30-40.

115. See B.V., G.V., 2 Kgs. 3:27.

116. B.V., 2 Kgs. 3:27, n. (b). See also G.V., 2 Kgs. 3:27 n. (r).

own wrath as an earthly god of war, a motive which would carry connotations of idolatry.

The scene of Agydas and Zenocrate, another of Marlowe's inventions, has raised questions. There is nothing in the sources, legendary or otherwise, to suggest this episode. On the other hand, incidents in the Bible bear some resemblance with this situation in which appearances are other than reality and persons are victimized as a consequence of this discrepancy. In spite of the fact that Joseph repeatedly refuses the offers made to him by the wife of the Pharaoh's captain of the guards, her machinations bring the whole weight of the guilt on Joseph's head and he is imprisoned as a result.[117] The Biblical text mentions that Potiphar, on hearing his wife's version of the incident, was incensed with jealousy, that his jealousy made him hear but one side of the story,[118] In the same way, anger, jealousy, refusal, or neglect to know the true purport of the conversation between Zenocrate and Agydas: these describe Tamburlaine's attitudes and reactions towards Agydas whom he discovers in deep conversation with Zenocrate (1T. 3.2.). Concern for Zenocrate had led Agydas to "know the cause of these unquiet fits"(1T. 3.2.2), fits presumably brought on by Tamburlaine's apparent neglect of her. Like the beloved in the Song of Songs, Zenocrate is "sicke of loue".[119] Out of interest for her welfare, Agydas urges her to leave Tamburlaine, whom he judges unworthy of her love, and to go back to her former betrothed Arabia. Tamburlaine arrives too late to hear about Zenocrate's grief. He misses the first part of the conversation and comes in time only to listen to Agydas's remarks about him. These remarks are anything but flattering and Zenocrate's firm refusals to heed to the advice of Agydas fail to soften Tamburlaine's wrath. Agydas immediately assesses the situation accurately. He knows that there is no hope for him in face of Tamburlaine's anger incensed by "jealousy and love" (1T.

---

117. See Gen. 39.

118. See G.V., Gen. 39:20, n. (n).

119. G.V., Song of Solomon, 2:5; 5:8.

own wrath as an earthly god of war, a motive which would carry connotations of idolatry.

The scene of Agydas and Zenocrate, another of Marlowe's inventions, has raised questions. There is nothing in the sources, legendary or otherwise, to suggest this episode. On the other hand, incidents in the Bible bear some resemblance with this situation in which appearances are other than reality and persons are victimized as a consequence of this discrepancy. In spite of the fact that Joseph repeatedly refuses the offers made to him by the wife of the Pharaoh's captain of the guards, her machinations bring the whole weight of the guilt on Joseph's head and he is imprisoned as a result.[117] The Biblical text mentions that Potiphar, on hearing his wife's version of the incident, was incensed with jealousy, that his jealousy made him hear but one side of the story.[118] In the same way, anger, jealousy, refusal, or neglect to know the true purport of the conversation between Zenocrate and Agydas: these describe Tamburlaine's attitudes and reactions towards Agydas whom he discovers in deep conversation with Zenocrate (1T. 3.2.). Concern for Zenocrate had led Agydas to "know the cause of these unquiet fits"(1T. 3.2.2), fits presumably brought on by Tamburlaine's apparent neglect of her. Like the beloved in the Song of Songs, Zenocrate is "sicke of loue".[119] Out of interest for her welfare, Agydas urges her to leave Tamburlaine, whom he judges unworthy of her love, and to go back to her former betrothed Arabia. Tamburlaine arrives too late to hear about Zenocrate's grief. He misses the first part of the conversation and comes in time only to listen to Agydas's remarks about him. These remarks are anything but flattering and Zenocrate's firm refusals to heed to the advice of Agydas fail to soften Tamburlaine's wrath. Agydas immediately assesses the situation accurately. He knows that there is no hope for him in face of Tamburlaine's anger incensed by "jealousy and love" (1T.

---

117. See Gen. 39.

118. See G.V., Gen. 39:20, n. (n).

119. G.V., Song of Solomon, 2:5; 5:8.

3.2.91). Agydas loses his life. The circumstances bringing about Agydas's death are similar to those of Haman in the Book of Esther. Ahasuerus, the king, has just been informed of the crafty measures his minister Haman has taken against the Jews, Esther's people.[120] Haman desperately begs Esther to plead for his life.[121] Ahasuerus surprises him in what appears to be a compromising situation, in earnest conversation with Esther.[122] The angered Ahasuerus immediately despatches his minister to the gallows before there is even time for any clarifications to be made.[123] In both incidents, deadly anger and jealousy on the part of the supposedly wronged party brings death to the victim. The fact that Zenocrate seems to be accompanied by her company of young Damascene virgins, as was Esther,[124] could be another argument to support the idea that perhaps Marlowe did have the story of Esther in mind when he wrote the scene of Agydas and Zenocrate.

Moses, Joshua, David, Judas Maccabeus, all are very great military leaders of Israel. Moses is described as a very great man[125] and a great scourge.[126] What

---

120. See Esther 7:1-7.

121. See Esther 7:7.

122. See Esther 7:8.

123. See Esther 7:9-10.

124. See Esther 2:8 ff. Zenocrate's associations with the Virgins of Damascus recall also those of Solomon's queen with her company of virgins. "The virgins that folowe her and her company, shalbe brought vnto thee": B.V., T.H., and G.V., Ps. 45:14. It is interesting to note that, in the same psalm, two out of the three fragrant herbs used by Solomon's queen are used to embalm the body of Zenocrate. Cf. "al thy garmentes smelle of Myrhe, Aloes, and Cassia" (see B.V., Ps., T.H., 45:8) with Zenocrate "Embalm'd with Cassia, Amber Greece and Myrre" (2T. 2.4.130). It is also interesting to notethat the same verse mentions the "iuorie palaces" of Solomon's queen. Three out of the six uses of the word "ivory" in the play refer to Zenocrate. They are the "Ivorie sled" in which Zenocrate will scale the mountain tops (see 1T. 1.2.98), the "Ivory pen"with which Beauty comments on Zenocrate (see 1T. 5.1.145), and the "Ivory bowers" of Zenocrate's eyes (see 2T. 2.4.9). Is all this so by sheer coincidence?

125. "Moses was a uery great man in the land of Egypt": B.V., Exod. 11:3.

126. Moses was instrumental in the destruction of the Egyptians: see Exod. 14.

is said of them could as well be said of Tamburlaine. Joshua is invincible on the battlefield[127] as all good Biblical scourges are. So do the legendary accounts, and Marlowe in their wake, portray Tamburlaine, as opposed to what the historical accounts have to say about Timur's military ventures. All was not victory and success for the historical Timur. Gideon,[128] David,[129] and Judas Maccabeus[130] are great warriors and earn for themselves a great name and world renown. The prestige and the scope of these warriors suggest those of Tamburlaine. However, the careers of Moses and David are not untainted by crime. Moses slays an Egyptian; David arranges for the death of Uriah, his rival.[132] Similarly, chroniclers have organized Tamburlaine's rise to power around the murder of Cosroe,[133] the obstacle to the throne. Like Tamburlaine, Moses robs the Egyptians of their jewels;[134] so does Nebuchadnezzar for the same motives as those of Tamburlaine, that is, to pay wages to his soldiers.[135]

Moses is associated with the tables of laws which he received from God to guide his people.[136] Moses and Joshua were both connected and responsible for the

---

127. "There shal not a man be hable to withstand thee, al the dayes of thy lyfe: For as I was with Moses, so wyl I be with thee ...", says the Lord to his warriors: B.V., Josh. 1:5.

128. Gideon is described as a "mighty man" (see B.V., Judges 6:12) or as a "valiant man" (see G.V., Judges 6:12), destined to strike down the foe "as one man": see G.V., Judges 6:16.

129. See B.V., G.V., 1 Sam. 18:17; B.V., 1 Sam. 18:17, n. (g); B.V., G.V., 1 Sam. 25:28. David was "a mighty man": see B.V., 2 Sam. 17:10.

130. See B.V., G.V., 1 Macc. 2:66.

131. See B.V., G.V., Exod. 2:12. The Biblical annotator makes the following comment: "Suche heroical dedes of the godly men are not to be folowed": B.V., Exod. 2:12, n. (e). Norms of conduct seem to be different from those to be followed by common mortals.

132. "Dauid dyd that whiche was ryght in the syght of the Lorde, ... saue only in the matter of Urias the Hethite": B.V., 1 Kgs. 15:5.

133. See 1T. 2.7.

134. See B.V., G.V., Exod. 12:35, 36.

135. See Ezek. 29:19.

136. "And I wil giue thee tables of stone, and the Lawe and the commandement, which I haue written ...": G.V., Exod. 24:12.

is said of them could as well be said of Tamburlaine. Joshua is invincible on the battlefield[127] as all good Biblical scourges are. So do the legendary accounts, and Marlowe in their wake, portray Tamburlaine, as opposed to what the historical accounts have to say about Timur's military ventures. All was not victory and success for the historical Timur. Gideon,[128] David,[129] and Judas Maccabeus[130] are great warriors and earn for themselves a great name and world renown. The prestige and the scope of these warriors suggest those of Tamburlaine. However, the careers of Moses and David are not untainted by crime. Moses slays an Egyptian; David arranges for the death of Uriah, his rival.[132] Similarly, chroniclers have organized Tamburlaine's rise to power around the murder of Cosroe,[133] the obstacle to the throne. Like Tamburlaine, Moses robs the Egyptians of their jewels;[134] so does Nebuchadnezzar for the same motives as those of Tamburlaine, that is, to pay wages to his soldiers.[135]

Moses is associated with the tables of laws which he received from God to guide his people.[136] Moses and Joshua were both connected and responsible for the

---

127. "There shal not a man be hable to withstand thee, al the dayes of thy lyfe: For as I was with Moses, so wyl I be with thee ...", says the Lord to his warriors: B.V., Josh. 1:5.

128. Gideon is described as a "mighty man" (see B.V., Judges 6:12) or as a "valiant man" (see G.V., Judges 6:12), destined to strike down the foe "as one man": see G.V., Judges 6:16.

129. See B.V., G.V., 1 Sam. 18:17; B.V., 1 Sam. 18:17, n. (g); B.V., G.V., 1 Sam. 25:28. David was "a mighty man": see B.V., 2 Sam. 17:10.

130. See B.V., G.V., 1 Macc. 2:66.

131. See B.V., G.V., Exod. 2:12. The Biblical annotator makes the following comment: "Suche heroical dedes of the godly men are not to be folowed": B.V., Exod. 2:12, n. (e). Norms of conduct seem to be different from those to be followed by common mortals.

132. "Dauid dyd that whiche was ryght in the syght of the Lorde, ... saue only in the matter of Urias the Hethite": B.V., 1 Kgs. 15:5.

133. See 1T. 2.7.

134. See B.V., G.V., Exod. 12:35, 36.

135. See Ezek. 29:19.

136. "And I wil giue thee tables of stone, and the Lawe and the commandement, which I haue written ...": G.V., Exod. 24:12.

making and the keeping of the Ark of the Covenant. This Ark was an elaborately-made box or coffer of wood overlaid with gold.[137] Its virtues were divine. Its presence amounted to a presence of the Lord in the midst of Israel.[138] It stimulated the valour and courage of the Israelites on the battlefield. They took care that it accompanied them in all their campaigns and in their peregrinations from one battlefield to the next.[139] Indeed, the period of their history during which the Ark was in the hands of the enemy the Philistines was a tragic time for the warring Israelites.[140] One wonders if the Ark might not, in some ways, have been a forerunner of the cult of shrines which was to play an important part in the history of Christian devotion.

Tamburlaine's cult for Zenocrate seems to have something of both and may possibly be a parody of the cult of shrines. Its outward signs are a coffin lapped in gold[141] which will follow Tamburlaine and his army wherever they go, a statue of her about which Tamburlaine and his mourning camp will march (2T. 2.4. 140-141), a "table as a Register / Of all her vertues and perfections" (2T. 3.2. 23-24) drawn up by Tamburlaine to be a source of inspiration for all: these sum up the tokens of Tamburlaine's devotion for the "divine Zenocrate". In addition to these, Tamburlaine plans to have on his royal tent a "sweet picture of divine

---

137. See Exod. 25:10-11.

138. "The Arke of the couenant, ... was the signe of Gods presence, ...": G.V. Deut. 31:11, n. (e). "The Arke testified Gods presence, and the tables of the Law conteined therein, signified Gods wil toward his people": G.V., Josh. 4:16, n. (g).

139. See Num. 10:33; B.V., G.V., Josh. 4:13; G.V., 2 Sam. 15:29; etc. The "Arke" was synonymous with "force" (see B.V., Ps., T.H., 78:61 and n. (g)) and "glory" (see B.V., Ps. 78:61), or with "power" and "beautie" (see B.V., Ps. 78:62 and G.V., Ps. 78:61). The annotator made the following comment "The Arke is called his power and beautie, because thereby he defended his people, and beautifully appeared vnto them": G.V., Ps. 78:61, n. (m). Beauty and military power are the assets of the Ark as they are of Zenocrate's picture and coffin.

140. See 1 Sam. 4.

141. "Not lapt in lead but in a sheet of gold": 2T 2.4.131. "Now eies, .../ ... / Pierce through the coffin and the sheet of gold": 2T. 5.3.224, 226.

Zenocrate" (2T. 3.2.27)[142] which "wil draw the Gods from heaven: / And cause the stars fixt in the Southern arke, / ... / As Pilgrimes traveile" (2T. 3.2.28-29, 32) to the northern hemisphere "onely to gaze upon Zenocrate" (2T. 3.2.33). The ideas of "Pilgrimes" and "Arke" are strangely evocative of the Exodus saga in which the Israelites led by the Ark are viewed as pilgrims on the march towards a promised land which, by extension, includes the whole earth and its inhabitants. This is especially so if one takes into account the benefits Tamburlaine hopes to draw from the presence of this picture. As the sight of the Ark stimulated the Israelites to perform with greater military valour in the battles of the Lord, so does Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God, expect the picture of Zenocrate to exercise as great an influence on his soldiers as would the presence of Bellona, the goddess of war (2T. 3.2.37-42).[143] Finally, as the Ark accompanied Israel everywhere, so does Tamburlaine travel in the company of Zenocrate's coffin. The details and the language which Marlowe inserts in the play might be considered, at the very most, but remotely evocative of the Biblical Ark and of its role and place in the history of Israel. For various reasons, this was possibly as far as Marlowe would dare go in the development of this theme. The dramatist had to respect the fact Tamburlaine was a pagan even though Biblical connotations could be inferred in his text.

Tamburlaine's first encounter with Theridamas is an important incident in the play. It marks the beginning of a lasting friendship and devotion for Tamburlaine on the part of Theridamas and represents a major step in the military career of the hero. With the least amount of effort imaginable, Tamburlaine

---

142. In a chapter on the evils of idolatry, more particularly on those of images, the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon has this verse: "When a father mourned grieuously for his sonne that was taken away suddenly, he made an image for him that was once dead, whome now he worshipeth as a god, and ordeined to his seruants ceremonies and sacrifices": G.V. Wisd. 14:14. Could Marlowe have intended idolatrous connotations to be inferred from Tamburlaine's mourning practices?

143. See also above, pp. 405 ff.

suddenly has at his disposal the services of the greatest Persian captain and his cavalry. Although Tamburlaine compares their relationship to that of Pylades and Orestes (1T. 1.2.243-246), the models of friendship in Greek mythology, the story might have other sources. The encounter of Tamburlaine and Theridamas is not of Marlowe's making. Chroniclers had invented this legendary meeting long before him.[144] How had these chroniclers come by this tale? There are several instances in the Bible of such close friendships, some of which are strikingly similar to that of Tamburlaine and Theridamas. David and Jonathan are the standard examples of close fiends, mutually devoted to each other. There are also cases of meetings which prove to be decisive turning points in the careers of the persons involved. On one occasion, David, who has been warned of the coming of the descendants of Benjamin and Judah, goes out to meet them. He tells them: "If ye be comme peaceably vnto me, to helpe me, myne hart shalbe knit vnto you; but yf ye comme to betraye me to myne aduersaries ...",[145] then they might expect the worst. The outcome of the meeting is that they become fast friends and David makes these messengers the heads of companies of his soldiers.[146] Although the meeting as anticipated by Tamburlaine and Theridamas is not literally copied on the one just mentioned, yet the one evokes the other. Tamburlaine, who has just received news of Theridamas's approach, is uncertain about the outcome. He advises his soldiers thus: "And looke we friendly on them when they come: / But if they offer word or violence, / Weele fight ..." (1T. 1.2.141-143). Tamburlaine undergoes a series of emotions very similar to those experienced by David. First comes alarm, then offers of peace based on pledges of friendship, both of these to be followed by war if friendship is refused. The interview is concluded on anticipated promotions for Theridamas. Is the similarity between the two

---

144. See above, p. 104.

145. B.V., 1 Chr. 12:17.

146. See B.V., G.V., 1 Chr. 12:18.

incidents based simply on the usual elements of any friendship especially in a context of war? Or did the chroniclers let their imagination run the course of Biblical patterns already familiar to them? Clearly Marlowe had no objections to the incident as told by these chroniclers. The meeting of Tamburlaine and Theridamas, the pledges of loyalty of the latter, both are more than phases of a mere budding friendship. The encounter has a military significance. It means the winning of a captain, a point worthy of note by Biblical standards. The Biblical annotator makes the following comment on another of David's important encounters, that of his meeting the captain Amasia. He explains "By this policie Dauid thoght that by winning of the captaine, he shulde haue the heartes of all the people".[147] Clearly, Tamburlaine, and thus Marlowe and the chroniclers as well, had this advantage in mind in arranging this scene. Finally, Jehosaphat's pledge to help Ahab, the king of Israel, sounds like that of Theridamas. He says "I am as thou art: my people as thy people: my horse as thy horses",[148] a pledge strikingly similar to Theridamas's "I yield myself, my men and horse to thee"(1T. 1.2.229).[149] While the similarities between the scene in Tamburlaine and the above Biblical incidents do not prove that the Bible influenced the tales of the chroniclers directly, the resemblances, nevertheless, do not allow one to dismiss this influence altogether. There are possible parallels.

The chroniclers stress the fact that Tamburlaine was chosen first as a leader among his peers and then as a king.[150] In this, the chroniclers could have been guided by several Biblical models. Jephthah, a judge of Israel, was chosen

---

147. G.V., 2 Sam. 19:13, n. (f). See also B.V., 2 Sam. 19:13 n. (f).

148. 1 Kgs. 22:4. The Geneva Bible annotator explains the pledge as follows: "I am ready to ioyne and go with thee, and all mine is at thy commandement": G.V., 1 Kgs. 22:4, n. (d).

149. There appears a verse in the Bible which runs like this: "He shutteth his eyes to deuise mischeefe": B.V., Prov. 16:30. The verse is explained as follows: "With his whole iudgement out he laboureth to bring his wickednes to passe": G.V., Prov. 16:30, n.(n). Cf. the verse with "His fierie eies are fixt upon the earth / As if he now devis'd some Stratageme": 1T. 1.2. 158-159. Are Marlowe's lines inspired by the verse in the Book of Proverbs?

150. See above, p. 103.

to be captain of his people. "The people made hym head and captaine ouer them".[151] Gideon was proclaimed king by his people,[152] as was Saul,[153] and was soon followed by a band of men ready to fight his wars,[154] a detail which reminds one of Tamburlaine and his unruly band. David was made king by his captains.[155] He confirmed his royal status by placing on his head a crown stolen from one of his victims of war.[156] So was Jonathan, brother of Judas Maccabeus, chosen and crowned king by his captains.[157] Tamburlaine is also chosen and acclaimed king by his peers.[158] Like David, he confirms his ambition to be king by placing on his head the crown of the slain Cosroe (1T. 2.7.52, s.d.). Did these similarities just happen by chance or were the Biblical texts the source perhaps unconsciously used first by the chroniclers and adapted by the dramatist?

The scene of the dying Tamburlaine is a Marlovian creation. The details of it correspond to neither the facts in the history of Timur nor to the tales of the chroniclers.[159] Upon what sort of material did the dramatist construct this scene? It would seem that several elements could be traced back to the Biblical text. Much to his surprise, Tamburlaine is suddenly stricken ill. As was the case for several Biblical characters, Joshua[160] and David[161] to name but two, Tamburlaine,

---

151. B.V., Judges 11:11.

152. See B.V., G.V., Judges 8:22.

153. See B.V., G.V., 1 Sam. 10:24.

154. See B.V., G.V., 1 Sam. 10:26.

155. See B.V., G.V., 1 Chr. 11:10 and B.V., G.V., 1 Chr. 12:38.

156. "And Dauid tooke the crowne of their king from of his head, ... and it was set vpon Dauids head": B.V., 1 Chr. 20:2.

157. See 1 Macc. 9:30.

158. This is implied in 1T. 2.5.78-80.

159. See above, p. 64, n. 131; p. 79 and n. 215; pp. 122-123.

160. "And beholde, this day doo I enter into the way of al the worlde,...": B.V., Josh. 23:14. "I dye accordyng to the course of nature": B.V., Josh. 23:14, n. (e).

161. "I goe the way of al the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shewe thee selfe a man": B.V., 1 Kgs. 2:2. "I am ready to dye as al men must": B.V., 1 Kgs. 2:2, n. (a).

the "earthly God", is forced back to the reality that he is but a man (2T. 5.3.44) and that he must follow the way of all nature: "The Scourge of God must die" (2T. 5.3.248). This line stresses the fact that divine missions, like Tamburlaine's and like those of Joshua and David in the Bible, do not dispense these heroes from the ordeals of illness and death inherent to human existence. Marlowe wishes to stress another point in the career of Tamburlaine: the hero dies before he has time to bring his mission to completion. In this, Marlowe again could have fashioned his hero on Biblical models. Moses, Joshua, and David, are all interrupted in their careers. They all have to entrust the completion of their missions to their successors. God withdraws Moses and David from their scenes of action each as a punishment for some past failing, Moses for having doubted God's word and power and David for having unjustly shed the blood of his rival Uriah. Because of his lack of faith, Moses dies before reaching the promised land;[162] because of his crime, David has been labelled "blood-sheader"[163] and, consequently, must relinquish the building of the temple of Jerusalem to his son Solomon.[164] Like Moses, who must give up his hopes of reaching the Promised Land, Tamburlaine, much to his sorrow, dies before seeing again the land of his birth.[165] Like David, Tamburlaine must abandon his plans of constructing a citadel in Babylon (2T. 5.1.163-164) and a stately palace in Samarqand (2T. 4.3.107-111).

---

162. See Num. 20:12.

163. "And beholde, thou art comme to thy mischiefe because thou art a blood-sheader": B.V., 2 Sam. 16:8. See also B.V., G.V., 2 Sam. 16:7.

164. See 1 Chr. 17:4. "Thou hast shead muche blood, and hast made great batayles: thou shalt, therefore, not build a house unto my name": B.V., 1 Chr. 22:8. "Thou shalt not buylde an house for my name, because thou hast benne a man of warre and hast shedde blood": B.V., 1 Chr. 28:3. Tamburlaine has shed blood ceaselessly. Moreover, his last engagements do not reveal any interest in God's glory. He is primarily concerned to the last with his own fame.

165. Tamburlaine is chastised in the same way that Israel was when carried to Babylon. God had warned them in this way: "But as for the lande that ye desyre to returne vnto, ye shal neuer comme at it agayne": B.V., Jer. 22:27. Tamburlaine never sees Samarqand again; like the Jews, he must die in Babylon.

All these plans on the part of Tamburlaine are pure Marlovian inventions. The dying Tamburlaine is most pathetic when, bent over a huge map of the world, he passes in review all the conquests he and his captains have made since the beginning of his warfare (2T 5.3.123 ff.). As the list of conquered territories lengthens, the amount left to subdue becomes more and more painfully obvious to Tamburlaine. Tracing the limits of the lands under his rule, however large these may be, by the same token, measures all there is left to take. Twice Tamburlaine cries out: "And shal I die, and this unconquered?" (2T 5.3.150,158). A deep sense of regret pervades the scene; only Tamburlaine's wishful thinking can give him the hope that his sons will conquer the rest of the world and somewhat alleviate his sorrow. The Elizabethans possibly recognized in Tamburlaine the lasts moments of the great warrior of God, Joshua, who, when he is about to die, reviews all the lands which have been subdued in the north, south, and east, and points to what there is left to conquer:[166] "This is the lande that yet remayneth; al the regions ...".[167] There is some reason to believe that Marlowe might have been dramatizing the last chapter of Joshua's life in this last scene of Tamburlaine. Both deliver a parting message. Joshua urges his followers to keep the laws of God;[168] Tamburlaine urges his sons to keep the hard rules of the warring conqueror.[169] Finally, Tamburlaine bids farewell to his sons; his physical being is too weak to hold the "fiery spirit it containes" (2T 5.3.168-169). Tamburlaine bequeathes his spirit to his two sons "imparting his impressions, / By equal portions into both ⌈their⌋ breasts" (2T 5.3. 170-171). Tamburlaine presumes that his indomitable spirit will be divided

---

166. "Iosuah was olde, and striken in yeeres, and the lord sayd vnto him, Thou art olde and striken in yeeres, and there remayneth yet exceedyng muche land to be possessed": B.V., Josh. 13:1.

167. B.V., Josh. 13:2.

168. "But in any wyse take diligent heede to doo the commaundement and lawe whiche Moses the seruant of the Lord, charged you ...": B.V., Josh. 22:5. "Iosuah, nowe at parting, willing to shew them his care, and his thankful hart for theyr paynes, remembreth them of the keeping of gods lawe, as the only meane of al the rewarde and felicitie he wisheth them": B.V., Josh. 22:5, n. (c).

169. See 2T 5.3.199-201, 228-244.

into two parts. The notion of such divisions occurs in the story of Elias. The prophet begs God in these words: "I pray thee, let thy spirite be double vpon me".[170] The annotator paraphrases this thought as follows: "Let thy Spirit haue double force in me, ... or let me haue twise so muche as the rest of the Prophetes: or thy spirit being deuided into thre partes, let me haue two".[171] Marlowe simplifies this kind of spiritual calculations; he makes Tamburlaine divide his spirit into two equal parts, one part for each of his sons.

More points must be noticed. God promises Israel that in its day of triumph its sun will never set or go down again;[172] so does Tamburlaine pursue his climb to power. He explains himself:

> For I the chiefest Lamp of all the earth,
> First rising in the East with milde aspect,
> But fixed now in the Meridian line,
> . . . . .
>
> (1T. 4.2.36-38)

supposedly will never set. The same passage suggests that Tamburlaine's light is brighter than any of the spheres of heaven; these are reduced to borrow light from him (1T. 4.2.33 ff).[173] The Book of Ecclesiasticus praises the merits of Simon, the son of Onias, in similar words. Simon is as the morning star, as the moon when it is full, as the sun shining upon the Temple of the Most High.[174] Like Joshua, Tamburlaine carries on warfare with and into the heavens.[175] The dramatist

---

170. B.V., 2 Kgs. 2:9.

171. G.V., 2 Kgs. 2:9, n. (g).

172. "Thy sunne shal neuer goe downe, ...": B.V., Isa. 60:20.

173. This could stem from a Biblical image illustrating the future glory of Israel: "The lyght of the moone shalbe as the light of the sunne and the sunne light shalbe seuen folde": B.V., Isa. 30:26. The annotator explains "When the Churche shalbe restored, the glorie thereof shal passe seuen times the brightnes of the sunne: for by the sunne and moone whiche are two excellent creatures, he sheweth what shalbe the glorie of the children of God in the kingdome of Christ": G.V., Isa. 30:26, n. (y). Does Tamburlaine enjoy already some of the glories of righteousness implied here?

174. See B.V., G.V., Ecclus. 50:6, 7.

175. See B.V., G.V., Judges 5:20 and Josh. 10:11-12.

could have picked up the idea of the sword reaching into the heavens from the visions of the Book of Wisdom.[176] Cosroe tells Tamburlaine to "lift [his] lofty arme into the cloudes, / That it may reach the King of Perseas crowne (1T. 2.3. 52-53). David is beyond harm; there is nothing to be gained by cursing him.[177] Neither is there anything to be gained by cursing Tamburlaine who can turn the curses cast on him against the curser (1T. 4.4.29-31). One could go on tracing similarities and analogies which suggest that the creation of Marlowe's play might have been inspired and influenced by the Biblical accounts of the careers of God's great leaders and warriors but there are other Biblical areas to be explored with the Marlovian figure of Tamburlaine in mind.

So far, the Biblical careers which have been examined as a possible background to Marlowe's play have been those of the leaders of Israel who might be labelled as the just and the faithful to the law of God, the saints of Israel. However, the Bible tells the story of many other characters who played a prominent part as well in the history of Israel in spite of the fact that they are unmistakably known to have been wicked and evil. The list is long, headed with the names of Cain and Nimrod of the dim beginnings of the history of mankind and extends down to Herod at the time of Christ. Each of these great leaders was involved in specific incidents in the history of the chosen people. Marlowe seems to have borrowed details from the stories of these tyrants among whom the more important will now be examined.

Heading the list of these Biblical tyrants is Nimrod, the "mighty hunter before the Lorde";[178] founder of Babel[179] which later became Babylon. Homiletic

---

176. "And broght thine vnfained commandement as a sharpe sworde and stode vp, and filled all things with death, and being come downe to the earth, it reached vnto the heauens": G.V., Wisd. 18:16. Although the passage is about the "almightie worde" of God leaping out of heaven as "a fierce man of warre" (see Wisd. 18:15), the image is there.

177. "Thogh they curse, yet thou wilt blesse": G.V., Ps. 109: 28. See also G.V., Ps. 109:28, n. (p).

178. B.V., Gen. 10:9.

179. "The begynnyng of his kyngdome was Babel ...": B.V., Gen. 10:10.

could have picked up the idea of the sword reaching into the heavens from the visions of the Book of Wisdom.[176] Cosroe tells Tamburlaine to "lift /his/ lofty arme into the cloudes, / That it may reach the King of Perseas crowne (1T. 2.3. 52-53). David is beyond harm; there is nothing to be gained by cursing him.[177] Neither is there anything to be gained by cursing Tamburlaine who can turn the curses cast on him against the curser (1T. 4.4.29-31). One could go on tracing similarities and analogies which suggest that the creation of Marlowe's play might have been inspired and influenced by the Biblical accounts of the careers of God's great leaders and warriors but there are other Biblical areas to be explored with the Marlovian figure of Tamburlaine in mind.

So far, the Biblical careers which have been examined as a possible background to Marlowe's play have been those of the leaders of Israel who might be labelled as the just and the faithful to the law of God, the saints of Israel. However, the Bible tells the story of many other characters who played a prominent part as well in the history of Israel in spite of the fact that they are unmistakably known to have been wicked and evil. The list is long, headed with the names of Cain and Nimrod of the dim beginnings of the history of mankind and extends down to Herod at the time of Christ. Each of these great leaders was involved in specific incidents in the history of the chosen people. Marlowe seems to have borrowed details from the stories of these tyrants among whom the more important will now be examined.

Heading the list of these Biblical tyrants is Nimrod, the "mighty hunter before the Lorde",[178] founder of Babel[179] which later became Babylon. Homiletic

---

176. "And broght thine vnfained commandement as a sharpe sworde and stode vp, and filled all things with death, and being come downe to the earth, it reached vnto the heauens": G.V., Wisd. 18:16. Although the passage is about the "almightie worde" of God leaping out of heaven as "a fierce man of warre" (see Wisd. 18:15), the image is there.

177. "Thogh they curse, yet thou wilt blesse": G.V., Ps. 109: 28. See also G.V., Ps. 109:28, n. (p).

178. B.V., Gen. 10:9.

179. "The begynnyng of his kyngdome was Babel ...": B.V., Gen. 10:10.

and other religious literature of the sixteenth century frequently refers to his name as the symbol and founder of cruel and despotic rule, a proverbial type of the tyrant "hated bothe of God and man".[180] The Biblical annotations shed light on just what was objectionable in this character. This tyrant's main occupation as a hunter was "inuading and oppressing neyghbours".[181] "Hunters" was another name for cruel princes[182] and "mighty" meant "a cruel oppressor and tyrant".[183] The expression "mighty hunter" could be pejorative in the fullest sense of the word. What is the true image of the "mighty Tamburlaine" which Marlowe introduces and models in his play? If the above meaning given to the word "mighty" is read in the word everytime Marlowe uses it in connection with his hero, there is no doubt whatever about the kind of tyrant Tamburlaine is meant to be. The dramatist takes pains to see that the image of the "mighty Tamburlaine" be preserved right through the play.

However discreet these allusions might be, Tamburlaine is referred to as a hunter as well in the play. His feats are daily "incivill outrages" (1T. 1.1.40), deeds of pillaging and oppression within the confines of Mycetes's kingdom (1T. 1.1.39). As a matter of fact, Tamburlaine is first introduced in the play as a fox preying upon Mycetes's "flockes of Passengers" (1T. 1.1.32). Tamburlaine is thus presented as some predatory animal, supposedly on the watch, hunting or tracking down his prey. The pun on the word "passengers" transforms the caravans of travellers crossing Mycetes's territories into flocks of birds, a suitable game for the hunting fox that is Tamburlaine. The allusion to Tamburlaine as a hunter is not glaringly evident in these lines and might pass unnoticed were it not that elsewhere in Tamburlaine the hero is again presented as a hunter. Later when

---

180. "His tyrannie came into a prouerbe as hated bothe of God and man: for he passed not to commit crueltie euen in Gods presence": G.V., Gen. 10:9, n. (f).

181. See B.V., Gen. 10:9, n. (c).

182. "Cruel princes are called in Scripture hunters": B.V., Gen. 10:9, n. (d). Other examples of wicked hunters are Cain and Esau.

183. G.V., Gen. 10:8, n. (e).

Zenocrate is praying to the "Gods and powers that governe Persia" (1T. 3.3.189) to make Tamburlaine victorious over Bajazet, she hopes that the Turks will fly from Tamburlaine "like flockes of fearfull Roes, / Pursude by hunters" (1T. 3.3. 192-193). "Flockes of passengers" and "flockes of fearfull Roes", these two enticing kinds of game could attract the fox Tamburlaine. Imagery related to hunting recurs again in the second part of the play. Tamburlaine proposes to march against the Turks, to "hunt that Coward, faintheart runaway" (2T. 3.2.149) Callapine along with Almeda until "fire and sword have found them at a bay" (2T. 3.2.151) the last words generally understood to be "at bay".[184] The language is unmistakably that of the hunt. Hunting imagery is used by Tamburlaine's enemies as well. Capolin describes the Soldan's troops "As frolike as the hunters in the chace / Of savage beastes amid the desart woods" (1T. 4.3.56-57). However, in view of the anticipated defeat of the Soldan, the hunter imagery is less convincing when used by the Egyptians than when it is called upon to describe Tamburlaine's activities of pillaging. Finally, Tamburlaine's motives closely match those of Nimrod. Pride and ambition drive Nimrod and his followers to build towers of Babel which would reach into the clouds.[185] Tamburlaine's aspirations to rule entertain "thoughts coequall with the cloudes" (1T. 1.2.65); he plans to build a palace in Samarqand "Whose shining turrets shall dismay the heavens" (2T. 4.3.112). Nimrod's career ends with his failure to build Babel, a proper climax to his evil ventures. Tamburlaine endshis career before realizing his plans to build palaces and citadels and dies in Babylon, a proper climax to Tamburlaine's supposedly wicked feats. If Marlowe meant Tamburlaine to be a new kind of Nimrod, then no more suitable place could be chosen for the death of his wicked tyrant than the evil context of Babylon.

However, the affinities between Tamburlaine and Nimrod, if they are real, are not the most important parallels to analyse about Marlowe's wicked hero. The

---

184. See Jump, ed. cit., n. 31, p. 143.

185. See B.V., Gen. 11:4, and n. (d); see also G.V., Gen. 11:4, n. (e).

dramatist makes no direct references to Sennacherib, nor to Nabuchadnezzar. Did he have to? Sennacherib was the personification of the cruel despot with the "proude lookes"[186] before whom ambassadors for peace, from Jerusalem in this case, beg and weep in vain[187] like their counterparts, the Virgins of Damascus, before Tamburlaine. Sennacherib is merciless, robs treasures,[188] destroys and reduces all to ruins.[189] The devastation he brings is so great that it is spoken of by all this world.[190] Judah[191] and Egypt[192] feel the weight of his tyranny until he himself is brought down along with Assyria of which he is the sum and symbol.[193] His pride does not exclude self-deification, a trait which reminds one of Tamburlaine. There are two details about Sennacherib's behaviour which strongly suggest that of Tamburlaine. Sennacherib, at one point, tries to intimidate Ezekiel and Jerusalem by affirming that he who resists him resists God.[194] Do we read in this Tamburlaine's similar radical condemnations of those who resist in him "the power of eternall majesty?"[195] We find on the lips of this Biblical tyrant, at least in the sixteenth-century editions of the Bible, the same exclamation as the one cried

---

186. B.V., Isa. 10:12. "In his tyme came Sennacherib vp, ... and lyft vp his hande against Sion, and defied them with great pryde": B.V., Ecclus. 48:18. He "boasted proudely": G.V., Ecclus. 48:18.

187. See B.V., G.V., Isa. 33:7.

188. See B.V., Isa. 10:13.

189. See G.V., Isa. 33:9, n. (o). See also B.V., G.V., Isa. 33:8 and G.V., Isa. 33:8, n. (n).

190. "His vengeance shalbe so great that all the worlde shal talke thereof": G.V., Isa. 13:13, n. (r).

191. See B.V., G.V., Isa. 19:4; 36:1.

192. See B.V., G.V., Isa. 43:3 and G.V., Isa. 43:3, n. (d).

193. "I haue begone to destroy the Assyrians in Sanecherib, so wil I continue and destroye them wholy ...": G.V., Isa. 14:25, n. (o).

194. Sennacherib claims he is sent of God: "The lord said to me, 'Go vp against this land and destroy it": G.V., 2 Kgs. 18:25. To this, the annotator adds the following: "The wicked alwayes in their prosperitie flatter them selues that God doeth fauour them. Thus he speaketh to feare Ezekiah that by resisting him, he shulde resist God": G.V., 2 Kgs. 18:25, n. (k).

195. See above, p. 517 and n. 340; p. 525.

out by Tamburlaine when he is stricken ill, an expression which has been the cause of many comments and tentative explanations on the part of the critics of the play. Was Tamburlaine's "What daring god torments my body thus?" (2T. 5.3.42) an echo of Sennacherib's "And what God is among al the goddes of the nations, that hath delyuered his land out of myne hande?".[196] Tamburlaine looks for a divinity responsible for his loss of health; Sennacherib looks for a deity responsible for his loss of territories. If Marlowe derived his inspiration for Tamburlaine's exclamation from Sennacherib's cry, then possibly the Elizabethans would have read in Tamburlaine's words "an execrable blasphemie against the true God, to make him equal with the idoles of other nacions"[197] and "to compare dead idols with the lyvyng God".[198] Therefore, in the same way that "God did moste sharpely punish"[199] Sennacherib's blasphemy by causing him to be utterly defeated, so did the Elizabethans possibly expect Tamburlaine to be suddenly stricken down as well. The internal evidence in the play, as was explained before,[200] does not necessarily extend the evil character of Tamburlaine's exclamation to the perversion of blasphemy. However, if the audience detected similarities between the Marlovian hero and the Biblical figure of Sennacherib, a figure with which the Elizabethans were familiar, then the Biblical inferences conjured up by Tamburlaine's cry might have cast on him the odium of an evil which cried out for an immediate and unavoidable end to his deeds. Thus, in both these great tyrants, we find despotism, tyranny, merciless cruelty, destruction, boundless pride, the ambiguous use of the "What God ...?", and an abrupt and disastrous climax to their career. Nevertheless, Sennacherib was a chosen instrument of God to execute his vengeance[201] in the same way that Tamburlaine proclaimed himself to be.

Two other names of great tyrants appear in the Bible: they are Nabuchadnezzar

---

196. B.V., G.V., 2 Kgs. 18:35.

197. G.V., 2 Kgs. 18:35, n. (m).

198. B.V., 2 Kgs. 18:35, n. (d).

199. G.V., 2 Kgs. 18:35, n. (m).

200. See above, p. 471.

201. See G.V., Isa. 10:5, n. (e) and G.V., Joel, 2:11 n. (h).

and Cyrus. The first, who destroyed Egypt and took Israel into captivity in Babylon, is cruel and idolatrous despotism personified. His deeds fill page upon page of the later history of Israel. The Elizabethans were familiar with his story as well, as his name recurs again and again in the literature, homiletic and religious, of the sixteenth century.[202] Nabuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, the inexorable scourge of Egypt and Jerusalem, is by far the more wicked of the two. In more ways than one, the Tamburlaine of the chroniclers and, much more so, the Tamburlaine of Marlowe's pen, suggests the Biblical portrait and career of this gigantic destroyer. One might object to the idea of any connection existing between the two because there do not appear any direct references to this despot in the play. One wonders, as the following study hopes to show, whether there was any need to make direct references to Nabuchadnezzar to relate him to Tamburlaine. The second great conqueror is Cyrus, especially remembered and praised for having destroyed Babylon and liberated the Israelites. As a stage character, Tamburlaine suggests the traits of Nabuchadnezzar; as the agent bringing about the ruin of Babylon, Tamburlaine recalls Cyrus, a name found in the play. Because Tamburlaine has something of both of these gigantic conquerors and because these two conquerors mutually exclude each other in history, for the sake of clarity, Marlowe possibly had best refrain from making any direct allusions to either of of the two. Other elements in the play could probably be relied upon to convey the fact that Marlowe had used details and incidents connected with these Biblical tyrants to construct his scenes.

Hyperbolic language is used to describe these Biblical despots. World-rule, unlimited power sweeping over the whole universe: these are the Biblical dimensions measuring the sway of Nabuchadnezzar and Cyrus. Marlowe imitates this language when he describes the power of his hero. Nabuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, is lord of the whole earth.[203] As "monarche and only ruler of the world",[204] his

---

202. For some instances of this, see above, p. 252 and n. 44; pp. 457-458.

203. See B.V., Judith 6:4 and G.V., Judith 6:5.

204. B.V., Ezek. 31:11, n. (e). Nabuchadnezzar was considered to be "the mightiest

(continued overleaf....)

dominion extends to the ends of the earth[205] so that "there was no greater power in the world than his".[206] His greatness outgrows the limits of this earth and reaches out into the heavens.[207] As for Cyrus, judging from his own words, one could say that because his claims to world-rule were supposedly of divine origin, he was a more religious character than the king of Babylon. According to Cyrus, God was directly responsible for his successes. "The Lord God of heauen hathe giuen me all the kingdomes of the earth ...",[208] and "hath made me kyng of the whole worlde",[209] says he. Tamburlaine's position is between that of the above two despots. Tamburlaine does not claim he had any direct call from God making him ruler of the world, but Tamburlaine's "dreaming-prophesies" do not altogether rule out a divine intervention. They place Tamburlaine's aspirations between the divinely-assigned and the autosuggestive areas of choices. Tamburlaine's "dreaming prophesies" suggest a greater-than-human source for his plans without including the possibility of a divine assignment. The language used by Tamburlaine when he expounds on his plans recalls that of Nabuchadnezzar rather than that of Cyrus.

Tamburlaine plans to extend his rule from east to west as the sun runs its

---

204. Continued ..... among the heathen": B.V., Ezek. 31:11. Bajazet claims this title: see 1T. 3.1.25. He loses it to Tamburlaine who is recognized as such: see 2T. 1.3.114 and 2T. 4.1.150.

205. Daniel interprets the greatness of Nabuchadnezzar as it was revealed to him in a dream: "It is thou, O Kyng, whiche art great and mightie, for thy greatnesse increaseth, and reacheth vnto the heauen, so dooth thy dominion to the endes of the earth": B.V., Dan. 4:22. See also G.V., Dan. 4:22. Nabuchadnezzar explains to his nobles and captains that "his purpose was to bryng the whole earth vnder his dominion": B.V., Judith 2:3. Tamburlaine's plans early in the play echo Nabuchadnezzar's declaration.

206. B.V., Ezek. 31:8, n. (d).

207. See above, p. 568, n. 205.

208. G.V., Ezra 1:2. See also B.V., G.V., 2Chr. 36:23. Isaiah says this of Cyrus: "The Lorde hath a loue vnto hym, and he shal perfourme his wyl agaynst Babel": B.V., Isa. 48:14. By the same token, the Lord could have a special love for Marlowe's hero, as his colleagues imply at the end of the play: see 2T. 5.3.1-41.

209. B.V., 3 Esdras 2:3.

course (1T. 1.2.38-40).[210] He does become the arch-monarch of the world.[211] While Tamburlaine's dramatic destruction of Babylon recalls that of Cyrus, his moral image is more like that of the despot Nabuchadnezzar. The Biblical text mentions that many kings would be made to serve Nabuchadnezzar;[212] Cyrus is described as the warrior who subdues kings before him,[213] who has kings as servants. Both are labelled "king of kings".[214] Tamburlaine is obviously successful in the same way, puts conquered kings to use in his own cruel way and acts like a "king of kings". Nabuchadnezzar is proud, aspires to the highest places;[215] Cyrus is driven by ambition;[216] Tamburlaine lives and acts on the impulses of ambitious pride.[217] There are similarities to be found in these three characters. The three are, nevertheless, agents of God, assigned to perform each a special mission over and above the realization of their own personal ambitions.

Nabuchadnezzar is the relentless merciless scourge of the whole world.[218]

---

210. So does God extend his name "from the rising of the sunne vnto the going downe of the same": B.V., Mal. 1:11.

211. See above,

212. "Al the people ... and great kinges shal serue hym": B.V., Jer. 27:7.

213. See G.V., Isa. 41:2.

214. For references to Cyrus as "king of kings", see Dan. 5:31. For references to Nabuchadnezzar as a "king of kings", see B.V., Dan 2:37; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 26:7.

215. Nabuchadnezzar is seen as a worldly leader through whom Satan is acting: see Scofield, ed. cit., n.2, p. 725, n. 1. Lucifer voices Nabuchadnezzar's ambition when he says: "I wyll clymbe vp aboue the cloudes, and wyl be lyke the hyghest of al": B.V., Isa. 14:14. See also G.V., Isa. 14:14. These words imply aspirations to deity. Lucifer, like Nabuchadnezzar, or vice versa, aspires to climb into heaven and exalt his throne beside the stars of God: see B.V., G.V., Isa. 14:13. "Pride hath budded" is the expression found in Ezekiel to describe "the proude tyrant Nabuchadnezzar": see B.V., Ezek. 7:10 and G.V. Ezek; 7:10 n. (f). "His hart was loftie and his mynde strengthened in pride": B.V., Dan. 5:20. See also G.V., Dan. 5:20. See also above, p. 568, n. 205.

216. See G.V., Ps. 137:9, n. (h); B.V., Dan. 9:1, n. (b), and G.V., Dan. 9:1, n. (b).

217. See 1T. 2.6.12-14; 4.2.76; 2T. 4.1.116.

218. "Nabuchadnezzar ... had smitten downe all the princes and people of the world" G.V., Jer. 50:23, n. (u). Nabuchadnezzar is called "the hammer of the whole

(continued overleaf ..)

Like Tamburlaine, he is described as the leader of herdsmen or captains whose main duty is to destroy.[219] He burns cities,[220] turns them into heaps of stones,[221] and destroys them[222] as sacrifices to soothe his rage. His cruelty admits no peace for himself nor for his victims.[223] The prophet Jeremiah describes him as the "way of life and death".[224] Only by yielding to his tyranny and serving him may one hope to survive.[225] Those who resist his will are doomed to die.[226] Obedience to the least of his wishes is the condition sine qua non to live. Biblical authors recognize him to be specifically sent by God to destroy Egypt.[227] In vain will the Egyptians rely on Arabia and other helpers.[228] The Pharaoh is compared to a crocodile,[229] as the Soldan compares his men to sleepy crocodiles who think themselves safe in the waters of the

---

218. Continued ..... worlde": G.V., Jer. 50:23. For his merciless destruction, see B.V., G.V., Jer. 21:7.

219. See G.V., Jer. 12:10, n. (k). For express references to Nabuchadnezzar as a shepherd, see B.V., G.V., Jer. 49:19.

220. See B.V., Jer. 32:29; 34:2, 22; 37:8; 38:23; B.V., G.V., 3 Esdras 1:55.

221. See B.V., G.V., Isa. 25:2 and Jer. 9:11.

222. Nabuchadnezzar destroys cities: see B.V., G.V., Jer. 4:7; 48:8.

223. See Jer. 14:19.

224. "Thus saith the Lord, Beholde, I set before you the way of life and the way of death": G.V., Jer. 21:8.

225. "By yelding your selues to Nabuchadnezzar" you shall live: G.V., Jer. 21:8, n. (c). See also B.V., G.V., Jer. 27:11, 17.

226. "By resisting him" you shall die: G.V., Jer. 21:8, n. (d). See also B.V., G.V., Jer. 27:8.

227. See B.V., G.V., Jer. 42:16; 46:13, 26; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 29:19; 30:10, 11, 19, 21, 22, 24, 25; 32:12. There are many verses referring to the fear and dread which Egypt will experience much in the same way that Marlowe's Damascus and Egypt undergo in the play: see B.V., G.V., Isa. 19:16; B.V., Isa. 46:5; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 30:10, 13; B.V., Ezek. 32:32, n. (x); B.V., G.V., Dan. 5:19.

228. For references to Egypt relying in vain on the help of allies, see B.V., G.V., Isa. 31:3; B.V., G.V., Jer. 46:9, 12; G.V., Jer. 46:16; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 30:5, 8.

229. The Lord "compareth Pharao to a dragon, or Crocodiles, whiche was wont to haunt the riuer Nilus": B.V., Ezek. 29:3, n. (b).

Nile (1T 4.1.1-10); both will fall as will all the other allies. Nabuchadnezzar will burn their temples and images[230] to eradicate idolatry in the same way that Tamburlaine burns the Koran and other superstitious books in Babylon. In vain will the Egyptians appeal to the materialistic interests of the conqueror. Riches of any sort fail to turn the wrath of the tyrant away from them.[231] The enemy will take all the treasures without giving any benefits in return.[232] The destruction[233] and the slaughter will be so great[234] that even the dead shall tremble at the fall of Nabuchadnezzar. They will meet him[235] and marvel[236] at him when he dies and accompany him in hell.[237] Enough has already been said about Tamburlaine in this study to

---

230. For the burning of the temples of Egypt, see B.V., G.V., Jer. 43:12, 13. For the burning of images, see G.V., Jer. 43:13.

231. "Because thou hast trusted in thy ... treasures, thou shalt also be taken": G.V., Jer. 48:7. "How are thei destroyed that put their trust in their strength and riches": G.V., Jer. 48:17, n. (l). "Their siluer and golde shal not be able to delyuer them in the day of the wrath of the lorde": B.V., G.V., Ezek. 7:19. This is said expressly of the Babylonians when they march against Jerusalem. The same idea with regard to the attitude of the Babylonians towards wealth being offered as a ransom recurs in the Bible: see B.V., G.V., Zeph. 1:8. The theme of the futility of riches in the days of the wrath of the Lord runs through Scripture: see B.V., Prov. 6:35 and G.V., Prov. 6:35; B.V., G.V., Prov. 11:4; G.V., Jer. 49:5, n. (f).

232. See B.V., G.V., Jer. 20:5.

233. See B.V., Jer. 4:7; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 30:11. Nabuchadnezzar is called "the destroyer" in the Bible: see G.V., Jer. 4:7; B.V., Jer. 49:19; B.V., G.V., Nahum 2:1.

234. He shall "fil the lande ful of slayne menne": B.V., Ezek. 30:11. See also G.V., Ezek. 30:11; B.V., G.V., Dan. 5:19; B.V., Judith 6:3.

235. "Hel also beneath trembleth to meete thee at thy commyng": B.V., Isa. 14:9. The dead will tremble "as thogh thei feared lest thou shuldest trouble the dead, as thou didest the lyuing": G.V., Isa. 14:9, n. (f). Similar ideas appear in Ezekiel in connection with the fall of Pharaoh. Kings and princes who are dead will rejoice at the fall of such a tyrant: see B.V., Ezek. 31:16, n. (i).

236. See G.V., Isa. 14:16, n. (k). They will think, "Is this the man that brought al landes in feare, and made the kyngdomes afrayde?": B.V., Isa. 14:16.

237. "Thou shalt be brought downe to the deepe of hel, to the sides of the lake": B.V., Isa. 14:15. The same welcome is given to the fallen Pharaoh: "They also went downe to hel with hym vnto them that be slayne with the swoorde":

(continued overleaf .....)

to convince the reader that Nabuchadnezzar and Tamburlaine are of the same category of human beings or dehumanized monsters. Nabuchadnezzar's activities, as described above, match those of Tamburlaine, including the reception he can expect from the underworld when he dies. According to Orcanes, legions of devils guarding the gates of hell ready to entertain his soul, will welcome him when he appears in their midst (2T 3.5.25-29). Never is the tyrant Tamburlaine of the second part of the play in the company of angels. Hell is the abode associated with him and devils are his anticipated mates.

Nabuchadnezzar's aspirations are not confined to human dimensions. He aims to root out all the gods so he alone may remain as god of all the earth.[238] His repeated victories and growing empire lead him to believe himself, as the prophet describes him, to be a god, at least in his heart.[239] At one point, Nabuchadnezzar is ready to take means to show that there is no god but himself.[240] Needless to say, he aspires to "climbe vp into heauen",[241] to exalt his "throne aboue besyde the starres of God".[242] However, events force him to realize that

---

237. Continued .... B.V., Ezek. 31:17. See also B.V., Ezek. 32:21. "Tho dead shal mete and mauelle at him": G.V., Ezek. 32:21, n. (n).

238. Nabuchadnezzar commands Holofernes to "roote out al the goddes of the lande to the intent that he onely myght be called /and taken/ for god of the nations": B.V., Judith 3:13. See also G.V., Judith 3:8.

239. The Lord addresses these words to Tyre's proud ruler: "... thou hast a proude hart, and hast sayd, I am a God, ... where as thou art but a man, and not a God, though thou set thyne hart as the hart of God": B.V., Ezek. 28:2. The annotator adds: "Thou diddest thinke in thine hart that thou wast equal with God": B.V., Ezek. 28:6, n. (b). In these passages, the ruler of Tyre is seen as the embodiment of Satan, the unseen but the real king of Tyre. What is true for the ruler of Tyre holds for Nabuchadnezzar as well. See also Isa. 14 and above, pp. 457-458. So did Darius set himself up as a god and consequently "passed not what wicked lawes he approued for the maintenance of the same": G.V., Dan. 6:9, n. (d). As supposed divinities, Nabuchadnezzar, Darius, and even Tamburlaine may set up their own system of morality.

240. See B.V., G.V., Judith 6:2. "That al the people maye knowe that Nabuchodonosor is the God of the earth, and that there is none other besyde hym": B.V., Judith 5:29. Is there much difference between Nabuchadnezzar as "the God of the earth" and Tamburlaine as "an earthly god"?

241. B.V., Isa. 14:13.

242. Ibid.

he is but a man[243] and also to develop an awareness, at least to some extent, as do Cyrus and Tamburlaine, that there is a true God, a recognition qualified as being only partial.[244] He ends his life as a scourge scourged. Could this description of Nabuchadnezzar more aptly fit Tamburlaine? Tamburlaine is pictured as the warrior engaged in strife against the gods. One by one, he supposes he has destroyed them, Mahomet being the last one he overcomes. Towards the end of his life, he still entertains thoughts of the "slaughter of the Gods" (2T. 5.3.50 and 48-52) and of carrying out a war against the gods. Nowhere in the play does Tamburlaine openly proclaim himself as the earthly god; other characters do it for him.[245] Possibly the audience is meant to suppose that

---

243. He is forced to admit his human limitations in spite of the fact that, according to the Biblical annotator, he had thought of himself in the following terms: "Like as God is safe in heauen, euen so I am safe that none can come to hurt me": B.V., Ezek. 28:2, n. (a). Similar feelings would account for Tamburlaine's surprise when he becomes ill and believes he is the envy of the gods of heaven because of his health: see 2T. 5.3. 48 ff. Other great warriors of the Bible are forced to become conscious of the same truth about themselves. For such references to Darius, see B.V., G.V., 1 Macc. 1:16.

244. Antiochus is led to make the following statement: "It is reason to be obedient vnto God, and that a man which is mortal, thinke not through pride, hym selfe to be equal vnto God": B.V., 2 Macc. 9:12. Antiochus is suddenly stricken ill like Tamburlaine: see B.V., G.V., 2 Macc. 9:5. For Nabuchadnezzar's recognition of the highest God, see B.V., Dan. 4:34 and G.V., Dan. 4:31. After his unsuccessful attempts to destroy Daniel, Darius is forced to recognize "the God of Daniel". The annotator makes this comment: "This proueth not that Darius did worship God aright, or els was conuerted: for then he wolde haue destroyed all superstition and idolatrie, and not onely giuen God the chief place, but onely haue set him vp, and caused him to be honored according to his worde: but this was a certeine confession of Gods power, whereunto he was compelled by this wonderful miracle" of Daniel being saved by divine power: see G.V., Dan. 6:26 and n. (m). About Cyrus's confession of faith in the true God, the Biblical annotator has this to say: "Not that Cyrus did knowe God to worship him aright, but he had a certeine particular knowledge, as profane men may haue of his power, and so was compelled to deliuer Gods people": G.V., Isa. 45:3, n. (e). Nabuchadnezzar, Darius, and Cyrus recognized the existence of a true God but not to the extent that this belief should have any influence on their policy and action in their own lives. The same may be said of Tamburlaine.

245. See 2T. 1.3.138; 3.5.22. This would suggest that Tamburlaine could be another Satan, specifically known as the "god of this world": see B.V., G.V., 2 Cor. 4:4.

Tamburlaine does believe that he is a god at least in his own heart. He hopes to have a place among the gods or the constellations of the heavens (2T. 4.3.60).[246] However, such suppositions are partly ruled out by Tamburlaine's act of faith in the "God full of revenging wrath" (2T. 5.1.182)[247] and his supposed conversion to "the God that sits in heaven" (2T. 5.1.200). Tamburlaine's illness carries him to the full realization that he is but a man (2T. 5.3.44). He dies a scourge scourged.[248]

The Biblical texts make it very obvious that Nabuchadnezzar is a wicked character, a Lucifer, another Satan, the evil prince of this world and wordly values, a ruler of the princes of this world.[249] Exegetes suggest the reason for the existence of tyrants of this nature by saying that through such earthly kings, who arrogate to themselves divine honours, Satan is fulfilling himself.[250] They easily assimilate these rulers to the apocalyptic beast,[251] or to the raging beast which Nabuchadnezzar becomes at some point in his life.[252] Like other tyrants who figure in the Bible, tyrants like Saul,[253] Antiochus,[254] to name but two, Nabuchadnezzar

---

246. For the idea of stars as gods, see B.V., G.V., Wisd. 13:2, 3.

247. Tamburlaine's recognition of the "God of revenging wrath" is similar in many ways to that of Nabuchadnezzar, Darius, and Cyrus: see above, p. 573, n. 244. The recognition of the true God by these Biblical figures does not bear the strength and conviction needed to lead them towards conversion and a reassessment of their policies; the same applies to Tamburlaine.

248. Tamburlaine's last words are "The Scourge of God must die": 2T. 5.3.248.

249. See Isa. 14. The Biblical annotation addresses Lucifer in these words: "Thou that thoghtest thy self most glorious, and as it were, placed in the heauen: for the morning starre that goeth before the sunne is called Lucifer to whome Nabuchadnezzar is compared": G.V., Isa. 14:12, n. (n).

250. See Scofield, ed. cit., n. 2, p. 725, n. 1 and p. 869, n. 1.

251. See Rev. 13 and 19:20.

252. See Dan. 4:32-35.

253. Saul was afflicted with fits akin to madness: see 1 Sam. 16:14, 15.

254. For references to the raging Antiochus, see B.V., Dan. 8:10, n. (p); B.V., G.V., Dan. 8:19; G.V., Dan. 8:19, n. (e); B.V., G.V., Dan. 8:23.

increasingly terrorizes his entourage by his mad fits of raging fury and cruelty.[255] The moral image of Tamburlaine is not alien to that of Nabuchadnezzar in this respect. In spite of his mission as a scourge of God, Tamburlaine, as a tyrant, belongs to the camp of Lucifer. After the death of Zenocrate,[256] his intermittent fits of rage develop into a permanent state of violent diatribes and actions verging on beastly madness.[257] In many respects Nabuchadnezzar bears the marks of a spiritual kinship with Tamburlaine or vice versa.

Biblical authors focused their attention on the role and action of Cyrus rather than on the man himself. They describe the destruction of Babylon and the liberation of Israel in connection with Cyrus. There are comparisons used to describe Cyrus which might have found their way into Marlowe's text. These may have been on the mind of the dramatist when he created his hero. Isaiah compares Cyrus to "a byrde out of the east"[258] called by God to execute his will.[259] The

---

255. For references to Nabuchadnezzar's furies, see B.V., and G.V., Dan. 3:13, 19; Judith 1:12.

256. Critics have said that the death of Zenocrate brings about a decided change in Tamburlaine's behaviour. It seems to signal an era of merciless and massive slaughter. Might the dramatist have remembered the significance of Ezekiel's loss of his wife, "the pleasure" of his eyes? Because this loss was symbolic of a new difficult period about to begin in the history of Israel, Ezekiel was neither to weep nor to mourn his loss: see B.V., G.V., Ezek. 24:16. Tamburlaine's period of mourning has always been considered rather brief.

257. The Biblical annotator points out that "the more, that tyrants rage, ... the more witty they shewe them selues in inuenting strange, and cruel punishements": G.V., Dan. 3:19, n. (i). As much could be said of Tamburlaine. The Biblical annotator likens proud and cruel men to beasts: "His enemies were so far, proude and cruel, that they were rather beastes then men": G.V., Ps. 22:12, n. (g). Tamburlaine is often compared to beasts and monsters in the play: see 1T. 2.6.7, 16; 4.1.17-18; 4.3.1-7; 2T. 4.1.168; 5.1.110; 5.2.13.

258. B.V., Isa. 46:11. This bird imagery is also used to illustrate the onslaughts of the Pharaoh and of Nabuchadnezzar. Of the Pharaoh, Ezekiel says: "But there was another Egle, a great one, whiche had great wynges": B.V., Ezek. 17:7 and n. (f). Nabuchadnezzar is compared to a flying eagle spreading his wings over the territories he means to conquer: see B.V., G.V., Jer. 48:40. See also B.V., G.V., Ezek. 17:3. Destruction comes upon Bozrah "lyke as it were an Egle" spreading his wings: see B.V., Jer. 49:22. The Psalmist describes God in those words: "He came flying vpon the wings of the winde": G.V., Ps. 18:10.

259. According to the Biblical annotator, God says of Cyrus: "Him ... I haue appointed to execute that, which I haue determined": G.V., Isa. 46:11, n. (k).

annotator explains this bird as "Cyrus, which shal come, as swift as a birde and fight against Babylon".[260] Elsewhere, the onslaught of the Medes and Persians led by Cyrus and rushing down against Babylon is compared to "a perilous wynde against Babylon",[261] "a destroying winde"[262] which will disperse them "as the winde dooth the chaffe".[263] There are two passages in the play which suggest that Marlowe might have been influenced by these descriptions of Cyrus and perhaps of Nabuchadnezzar as well,[264] when he created his hero. Speaking of his curtle-axe, Tamburlaine explains his distinctive use of it in the following lines:

> These are the wings shall make it flie as swift,
> As dooth the lightening, or the breath of heaven:
> And kill as sure as it swiftly flies.
> (1T 2.3.57-58)

Elsewhere Amyras speaks of his father in these words:

> Now brother, follow we our fathers sword,
> That flies with fury swifter than our thoughts,
> And cuts down armies with his conquering wings.
> (2T 4.1.4-6)

In both of these passages Tamburlaine has wings, conquering ones endowed with swiftness and power which suggest those of a mighty bird under the thrust of a mighty wind. These wings are those of a warrior; they wield weapons, the curtle-axe or the sword, make them fly like lightning, more quickly than thoughts, or as "the breath of heaven" or the wind. Does the dramatist, by this bird imagery, mean to link Tamburlaine with Cyrus, his predecessor as king of the Medes and

---

260. G.V., Isa. 46:11, n. (i).

261. B.V., Jer. 51:1.

262. G.V., Jer. 51:1. Nabuchadnezzar is also compared to a strong wind coming against his enemy: see B.V., Jer. 4:11. He is also compared to a north wind: see G.V., Jer. 4:11, n. (i). Nabuchadnezzar is also likened to a cloud in a strong wind; his horses are swifter than eagles: see B.V., G.V., Jer. 4:13 and G.V., Jer. 4:13, n. (l).

263. G.V., Jer. 51:1, n. (a).

264. See above, p. 575, n. 258.

Persians, and possibly with Nabuchadnezzar as well?

Nabuchadnezzar destroys Egypt; Cyrus destroys Babylon; Tamburlaine destroys both. Tamburlaine's destruction could reflect Nabuchadnezzar's methods of destroying Egypt; Tamburlaine's manner of dealing with Babylon could evoke the part played by Cyrus in this Biblical incident. An examination of the fate of the Egyptians and of the city of Babylon in the play against the incidents as they are described in the Bible might show up Tamburlaine as a combination of these two despots.

The Biblical accounts describe the armies of Nabuchadnezzar as a multitude rushing down from the North,[265] inspiring deadly fear and terror among their victims, the Egyptians.[266] These Egyptians deserve to be destroyed for their idolatrous practices[267] and Nabuchadnezzar is the chosen agent to perform this destruction.[268] Idolatrous practices are easily identified as the effects of a stubbornness proper to people who mean to persist in their evil paths and refuse to be converted

---

265. See B.V., G.V., Jer. 46:20.

266. See above, p. 570, n. 227.

267. See B.V., G.V., Jer. 46:25.

268. "Beholde, sayth the Lorde, I wyl deliuer Pharao ... into the handes of Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, his enimie ...": B.V., Jer. 44:30. See also G.V., Jer. 44:30, n. (p). The Bishops Bible offers a version of a verse in the Book of Judith which, oddly enough, seems to connect the ideals of chivalry with Nabuchadnezzar. It appears in a passage in which Holofernes is defending the position of Nabuchadnezzar as the only god as opposed to the God of Israel. He makes Nabuchadnezzar say the following: "Then shal the swoorde of my knyghthood goe through thy sydes ..." B.V., Judith 6:4. The Geneva Bible translates the same passage as follows: "And then shall the yron of mine armie ... passe through thy sides ...": G.V., Judith 6:7. There are allusions to chivalry in Tamburlaine which appear rather exotic in the Moslem world of the play. Tamburlaine compares himself to Hector, "tne worthiest knight that ever brandisht sword", ready to challenge anyone in combat as Hector did Achilles: see 2T. 3.5.70-72. He refuses to allow his "discipline of armes and Chivalrie" to be marred by any "thoughts effeminate and faint" (see 1T. 5.1.175, 177) and is concerned about training his sons "in armes and chivalry": 2T. 4.1.81. These allusions might be the dramatist's manner of conveying Tamburlaine's singleness of purpose in his total dedication to warfare as a scourge. But one wonders by what channel of thought these notions drawn from the medieval age of the crusades might have made their way into Marlowe's play.

according to the teaching of the Bible. The Egyptians, as they were in the time of Moses, are accused of this kind of stubbornness,[269] an evil worthy of severe scourging. Egypt may stake her hopes in its confederate allies, Arabia, Ethiopia and others, all pictured as her lovers in the Biblical account,[270] but the Bible specifically points out how error of judgment among the allies[271] and the inherent weakness of Egypt[272] are at the root of the disaster meted out to them by Nabuchadnezzar. The situation of Egypt in Tamburlaine is similar. The Soldan relies on Arabia to save his armies, all to no avail. As in Marlowe's play, Egypt and her confederates fall and are totally destroyed by the tyrant from the North. Tamburlaine's destruction of Egypt is largely focused on the fate of the Virgins of Damascus and the massacre ensuing from their failure to sway Tamburlaine's

---

269. See. G.V., Jer. 44:30, n. (p) and B.V., Jer. 43:2.

270. See G.V., Ezek. 16:33, 36, 37. The allies of Jerusalem are represented as false lovers with connotations of idolatry. This is so in these verses of the Lamentations which run like this: "How doeth the citie remaine solitarie that was ful of people? She is as a widdow: she that was great among the nacions and princesse among the prouinces, is made tributarie. / She wepeth continually in the night and her teares runne downe by her chekes: among all her louers, she hathe none to comfort her: all her friends haue delt unfaithfully with her and are her enemies": G.V., Lam. 1:1-2. The image suggested by those verses leads one to wonder whether Marlowe might have been inspired by these Biblical texts when he created the character of Zenocrate, a product of his imagination. The image of the tearful princess, the daughter of Egypt in reality, the implied identification of Zenocrate with her country and city, the estrangement from her first lover, Arabia, whose name joins him inseperably with his country, forced upon her by circumstances, her grief over being forsaken by Tamburlaine as a widow would be: all of these aspects suggest that a possible relationship might exist between Marlowe's dramatic Zenocrate and the portrait of the forsaken Jerusalem quoted above.

271. The behaviour of Egypt before Sennacherib is accounted for as follows: "The Lord hath mingled among them the spirit of errours, and thei haue caused Egypt to erre in euerie worke thereof, ...": G.V., Isa. 19:14.

272. The position of Egypt in face of Sennacherib's onslaught is described as follows: "The mynde also of Egypt shalbe cleane without counsayle within it selfe and the deuice that they take, wyl I destroy": B.V., Isa. 19:3. The Soldan obviously has misjudged the situation in his encounter with Tamburlaine.

will. The consequence is that the aged, the young, the brides and bridegrooms, the children, all are mercilessly exterminated,[273] the death of the Virgins being the worst deed of all. A tearful Zenocrate mourns the loss of all those victims of Tamburlaine's wrath. In Zenocrate's estimation, "Damascus walles di'd with Egyptian blood" (1T 5.1.320), streets strewn with mangled bodies (1T 5.1.322), the whole scene topped with "another bloody spectacle" (1T 5.1.339), the bodies of Bajazet and Zabina, call for mourning of the universe, for an earth bathed in fountains of tears,[274] throbbing with the sobs of grief and trembling with fear (1T 5.1.349) and for a heaven blushing with shame (1T 5.1.350).[275] The convulsive expressions of sorrow suggested by Zenocrate seem to echo the convulsive sobs of the Egyptians groaning under the heavy hand of Nabuchadnezzar. The grief of the Egyptians, symbolized by the sorrowful "daughter of Egypt",[276] matches that of Zenocrate, daughter of the Soldan and, therefore, of Egypt as well. Egypt is addressed in these words: "O Virgin, thou daughter of Egypt",[277] This daughter in the Bible becomes "confounded [as Zenocrate is in the play]

---

273. Marlowe's Damascus undergoes a fate similar to that described for its Biblical equivalent. For the fear experienced by the city, see B.V., G.V., Jer. 49:5, 23-26. For the kind of slaughter undergone by the Biblical cities, see B.V., G.V., 3 Esdras 1:53. For the total destruction inflicted upon the city, see B.V., G.V., Isa. 17:1. See also B.V., G.V., Jer. 16:6; B.V., Ezek. 30:18, n. (e); B.V., G.V., Ezek. 32:18.

274. See 1T 5.1.347-348. "A welle of teares" (see B.V., Jer. 9:1) or a "fountaine of teares" (G.V., Jer. 9:1), are expressions used to describe the grief of Jeremiah for the slaughter of his people. Cf. B.V., G.V., Jer. 4:28 and B.V., G.V., Isa. 33:9.

275. Cf. B.V., G.V., Jer. 4:28.

276. B.V., G.V., Jer. 46:11, 24; B.V., G.V., Ezek. 32:16; 4 Esdras 15:12.

277. B.V., G.V., Jer. 46:11. The daughter of the Pharaoh is urged thus: "Forget ... thine owne people and thy fathers house": B.V., Ps. 45:10. This is not far removed from Tamburlaine's attempt to persuade the captive Zenocrate that she is in a better state with him than she would be "even in the circle of [her] Fathers armes: / The mightie Souldan of Egyptia": 1T 1.2.3, 5-6. The annotator of the Bible points out the symbolic use that is made of the "figure of Pharaohs daughter": it stands for the Church: G.V., Ps. 45:10, n. (i). One wonders what the real significance of Zenocrate is in the play.

deliuered into the handes of the people of the north",[278] as Zenocrate and her people are under the hand of Tamburlaine. Like the daughter of Egypt whose "teares runne downe lyke a riuer day and night",[279] Zenocrate "with hairedis-cheweld wip'st [her] watery cheeks" (1T. 5.1.139). Both are grieved by the plight of the Egyptians. The extent of the massacre inflicted upon the Egyptians by Nabuchadnezzar, and by Sennacherib before him, is of the same scale as that of Tamburlaine. "Young and olde lye thorowe the streetes vpon the grounde, my maidens and young men are slayne with the sworde whom thou in the day of thy wrathful indignation hast put to death",[280] is the reproach addressed to Nabuchadnezzar by Jeremiah. The wrath of God acts through Nabuchadnezzar as it does through Tamburlaine. Zenocrate's surprise and grief at the discovery of the dead bodies of Bajazet and Zabina breaks out in these words:"Ah, wretched eies, the enemies of my hart" (1T. 5.1.340), another form of the Biblical lament: "Mine eyes breaketh myne hart".[281] At the root of all this sorrow is Tamburlaine's ambition to rule and possess Egypt, or as the Bible would put it, to "aray hym selfe with the lande of Egypt, lyke as a sheepehearde putteth on his coate".[282] Was the presence of these sorrowful lines in connection with the fall of Egypt in the Bible the source of Marlowe's inspiration for incorporating the character of Zenocrate in the play, a fruit of Marlowe's creativity? The fall and conquest of Egypt focus the attention of the reader on Zenocrate as the medium through which the horror and grief produced by the incident is expressed. In a similar manner, the horror of the Biblical destruction of Egypt by Nabuchadnezzar is voiced through the grief of the "daughter of Egypt". Does the Marlovian fall of Egypt recall the

---

278. B.V., Jer. 46:24.

279. B.V., Lam. 2:18. See also Lam. 3:48; B.V., G.V., Jer. 14:17.

280. B.V., Lam. 2:21.

281. B.V., Lam. 3:51.

282. B.V., Jer. 43:12.

Biblical one only by sheer coincidence? Or was the latter the model for the former? If so, does Tamburlaine's treatment of Babylon reflect the fate of that city under the blows of Cyrus as related in the Bible?

The Babylon of the Bible was guilty of the three evils which drew down the wrath of God from heaven. Firstly, Babylon was the seat of idolatry[283] and the symbol of defiance of God,[284] "for the lande woorshyppeth images and delyghteth, woonderfully in idolles".[285] Marlowe chooses to make the Babylon of his play the seat of a special kind of idolatry which would unfailingly elicit responses of condemnation from the audience. He makes the city the seat of Moslem idolatry, an invention of his. The dramatist fuses the notion of images as signs and symbols with that of idols or gods in his Alcaron, the symbol of the Moslem faith and an idol at the same time.[286] As the proper way of dealing with images and idols in the Bible was to burn them, so does Tamburlaine burn the Alcaron along with other superstitious books found in the Moslem temples of Babylon (2T. 5.1.172-175). Secondly, another sin of the Biblical Babylon was pride.[287] God addresses her thus: "O thou proude ...",[288] and foretells her fate: "Thy day is come, euen the time that I wil visite thee",[289] for "the proud shall stumble and falle and no more shal helpe him vp".[290] The Babylon described by the prophet Jeremiah is the emblem of pride: "Though Babylon clymed vp into heauen and kept her power on hygh, yet shal I sende her destroyers".[291] The Biblical annotator remarks that "Babylon is called a hyl,

---

283. See G.V., Isa. 40:18, n. (u); see also B.V., G.V., Isa. 21:9; 46:1. See also Scofield, ed. cit., n. 2, p. 967, n. 2.

284. See B.V., Jer. 50:29.

285. B.V., G.V., Jer. 50:38.

286. See above, pp. 319-320; p. 319, n. 255; p. 320, notes 258, 259; pp. 324 ff.

287. See G.V., Jer. 50:29. See also B.V., G.V., Isa. 13:11.

288. B.V., Jer. 50:31.

289. G.V., Jer. 50:31.

290. B.V., Jer. 50:32.

291. B.V., Jer. 51:53. See also G.V., Jer. 51:53.

although it stoode in a low place, ... for that her walles and buyldynges were so great and hygh as mountaynes".[292] "Babel the glorie of kingdomes, the beautie and pride of the Chaldeans"[293] shall be destroyed, says the prophet. Marlowe has preserved the image of a Babylon imbued with its own boundless pride and aspirations in the details describing the city. Babylon could boast of "stately buildings" (2T. 5.1.63), of "lofty pillars higher than the clouds" (2T. 5.1.64),[294] a description which recalls the ambitions of the early Babel,[295] as well as those of Tamburlaine to build stately palaces, "whose shining turrets shall dismay the heavens" (2T. 4.3.111-112), and citadels (2T. 5.1.163-164). The audience may already anticipate the end of Tamburlaine. "Stately", "lofty", "higher than the clouds", these terms suggest the kind of pride which draws the wrath of God. Finally, the Babylon of the Bible was guilty of stubbornness,[296] a refusal to amend its ways. Foolish and blind determination, refusing to understand the situation as it is, these could well portray the Governor's position in the play.[297] To resist the will of Tamburlaine is to resist God himself as has been shown above.[298] Moreover, Marlowe makes evident the fact that the Governor's determination to hold out against Tamburlaine's troops does not stem from wisdom, nor from a true love of his countrymen, nor from any feelings of patriotism towards his city, as

---

292. B.V., Jer. 51:25, n. (d). Slime is known to have existed in that region; it was used in building the tower of Babel: see G.V., Gen. 11:3, 4.

293. G.V., Isa. 13:19.

294. "Pillars" could carry idolatrous connotations. The word "images" is used as its equivalent by the Geneva Bible: cf. B.V., Jer. 43:13 and G.V., Jer. 43:13. Was Marlowe aware of the synonymous value of the two words?

295. "Let vs buylde vs a citie and towre, whose toppe may reache vnto heauen, ...": B.V., Gen. 11:4. Wishful pride and ambition were the motives of the inhabitants of the early Babel: see B.V., Gen. 11:4, n. (d) and G.V., Gen. 11:4, n. (e).

296. See B.V., G.V., Isa. 48:4 and G.V., Isa. 48:4, n. (e).

297. See the discussion between the Governor of Babylon and the citizens of that city in 2T. 5.1.1-62.

298. See above, p. 517 and n. 340; p. 525.

events prove later. His position is nothing more than a stubborn refusal to yield to Tamburlaine's demands, unsustained by the degree of courage required to carry out his determination to the end. The emptiness of his reiterated resolutions to stand against Tamburlaine comes to the fore when, in a desperate and cowardly attempt to save his own life after he has sacrificed the lives of his countrymen, he tries to buy off Tamburlaine's clemency (2T. 5.1.115-118). The Governor's leadership lacks the honesty and greatness which would make him a hero and draw the sympathy of the audience, a development in the play which Marlowe obviously does not want. Consequently, the Babylon of Marlowe's making is guilty of the three evils of idolatry, pride, and a certain kind of stubbornness as was the Babylon of Nabuchadnezzar.

Marlowe does not appear to have drawn his information about the destruction of Babylon from the historical accounts which describe Cyrus's capture of the city. According to these accounts, Cyrus first defeated the Babylonian armies and then entered the city in triumph and in peace.[299] Cyrus, one of the most attractive figures of the East who remains unmarred by crime or cruelty,[300] is said to have set up the images and shrines of the local gods again after his triumphant entry and to have brought the gods back in their sanctuaries,[301] a deed which shows his sympathy for the idolatrous cults practised in the city. He is also remembered for the tolerance and understanding he displayed towards the Jews held in captivity in Babylon.[302] However, because Cyrus was instrumental in liberating

---

299. "This conquest, ..., did not follow the normal pattern. It was without parallel in the military practice of the ancient Orient, for this time there were no columns of smoke rising from behind shattered walls, no temples or palaces razed to the ground, no house plundered, no man butchered or impaled": Werner Keller, The Bible as History (New York, 1956), p. 310. According to Babylonian documents, Cyrus relates the following about the conquest of the city: "...I entered Babylon in peace and established my royal residence in the palace of the princes amid jubilation and rejoicing, ...": (see ibid.). clearly, a picture altogether different from the one emerging from the play, if Tamburlaine is meant to be another Cyrus.

300. See ibid.. p. 308.

301. See ibid.. p. 311.

302. See ibid.

Israel from the tyranny of Babylon and because the ill treatment of Israel cried out to heaven for a just chastisement of the oppressor, the Biblical authors have described the event of their liberation in a Biblical imagery which suggests the kind of violence and destruction expected from a revenging God acting through his scourge. Thus Cyrus, a great and admired figure in history, becomes a wrathful scourge of God in the Bible and the fall of Babylon, his deed of destruction and ruin. There are details in Marlowe's treatment of the incident which point to Biblical influences but there are other which were obviously drawn from other sources. What are the main facts to be noticed about Marlowe's dramatic destruction of Babylon and to what sources does each point to?

The geographical setting which Marlowe creates for Babylon seems to be of his own making with possibly the help of historical details connected with the destruction of other cities of the East. Marlowe places the Limnasphaltis Lake in the vicinity of the city; later Callapine speaks of "great Babylon, /Circled about with Limnasphaltis Lake" (2T. 5.2.4-5) in other words, of Babylon somewhat as an island. The name of the lake suggests the presence of slime or asphalt. Slimy pits were known to have existed in the area of Babylon,[303] but there does not appear to have existed a lake of that name surrounding the city. This seems to be of Marlowe's creation. Tamburlaine's method of attack of the city presents other problems. He claims that the force of his cannons have carried the buildings and the pillars of the city into the lake and "Now fil the mouth of Limnasphaltes lake, / And make a bridge unto the battered walles" (2T. 5.1.67-68). Clearly, Marlowe's Babylon appears to be an island city, surrounded by water, accessible only by means of a bridge. Later in the same passage, Tamburlaine alludes to past events in the history of Babylon, particularly to Alexander's triumphant entry into the city, an entry which he now hopes to emulate (2T. 5.1.69-70). Ruins in the sea, a bridge, surrounding waters, the allusion to Alexander, all of these suggest the destruction of another city of the East

---

303. See above, p. 582 and n. 292.

as related in the history of those parts. Tyre was the other city of the Bible which had been destroyed for reasons similar to those crying out for the destruction of Babylon, according to the prophetic insight of Ezekiel. At first, this city was on the coast of Phoenicia, on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. At one point, Nabuchadnezzar had conquered and destroyed the city. Some of the people from Tyre had escaped to an island facing the site of the old Tyre and built a new city there. Three hundred years later, Alexander the Great, in his plans to conquer this island city, displayed a piece of engineering skill which has drawn the admiration of the readers of the account ever since. By throwing the remains of the ancient Tyre into the sea, Alexander was able to build a bridge or a causeway which allowed his troops and the huge towers he had built to move within battering distance of the island city. The old Tyre, whose ruins still lie in the sea under Alexander's causeway, was never rebuilt as the prophet had foretold.[304] Thus the story of the conquest of Tyre could be the basis of Marlowe's account of Tamburlaine's attack and destruction of Babylon. However, Marlowe incorporates other details which seem to be inspired by the Biblical imagery used in connection with the destruction of that city.

The Babylon of the Bible is thoroughly battered. According to the prophet, the enemy shall make breaches in her walls.[305] Her thick walls shall be broken and done down; her gates shall be burnt up, her foundations shall fall.[306] The whole city will crumble in ruins and never shall it be built again.[307] Much is said about the city having great hidden treasures and riches,[308] of her wealth being

---

304. See Scofield, ed. cit., n. 2, p. 867, n. 1 and Keller, op. cit., n. 299, pp. 320-321.

305. Ezekiel gives this detail which Marlowe has used in his dramatization of the destruction of Babylon, an imitation of the fall of Tyre: see G.V., Ezek. 26:10.

306. See B.V., G.V., Jer. 51:58; 50:15.

307. See B.V., G.V., Ezek. 26:14. Again, this is a detail given about the fall and ruin of Tyre.

308. "I shall geue thee hid treasures ...": B.V., Isa. 45:3. "O thou that dwellest by the great waters, O thou that hast so great treasure and riches, ...": B.V., Jer. 51:13. Are these the sources used for the scene about the Governor's treasure hidden in the lake?

enormous but absolutely useless to wield the mind of the conqueror into accepting the treasures in exchange for the lives and freedom of the Babylonians.[309] The enemy despoils the city of her gold and silver[310] and leaves but death and ruin behind.[311] Similarly, Tamburlaine talks much of "battered walles"[312] in connection with his onslaught of the city and of breaches made in the wall of Babylon.[313] All the stately buildings and lofty pillars are felled down as ruins. As in the Bible, the land is laid waste;[314] the city is as a heap of stones[315] and will never be built again. The incident of the treasure hidden in the lake, the hope of the Governor to save his life (2T. 5.1.115-118), shows the extent to which treasures and wealth were part and parcel of the city and yet were useless to save the Governor's life. But by far, the imagery of the unfurling waters used in the Bible in connection with the ruin of Babylon is the more pertinent.

The description of the fall of Babylon, as it is described by the prophet, could justify Marlowe's use of water imagery in dramatizing the fate of the city. The prophet addresses the Babylon of the Bible as a city "that dwellest by the great waters".[316] The Biblical annotator, and historians as well,[317] mention that slimy pits were known to exist in the area of the city but the Biblical imagery suggests the presence of bodies of water of much greater importance. Marlowe

---

309. See G.V., Isa. 13:12, n. (1) and B.V., G.V., Isa. 13:17.

310. See B.V., G.V., Jer. 50:10, 30.

311. See B.V., Jer. 50:22 and G.V., Jer. 50:22; B.V., Jer. 50:27; B.V., G.V., Jer. 50:30, 37; 51:3; Ezek. 9:6.

312. See 2T. 5.1.15, 68, 105, 159.

313. See 2T. 5.1.2., 100, 101, 159.

314. See B.V., G.V., Jer. 51:29. See also B.V., G.V., Jer. 50:3.

315. See B.V., Jer. 51:37.

316. B.V., Jer. 51:13.

317. See Keller, op. cit., n. 299, p. 200. See also above, p. 582 and n. 292.

possibly combined these ideas by creating this Limnasphaltis Lake in the vicinity of the city. However, the Biblical imagery used in connection with the fate of the city suggests yet something else. The great armies of the Medes and the Persians,[318] which lay siege[319] against the Babylon of the Bible, come from the North[320] like a sea which has risen over the city and covered her with great waves.[321] The Lord speaks of bringing up the deep upon her that the waters may cover her.[322] Babylon, her goods and all her substance, shall be drowned[323] and sink away as a water flood,[324] and become a waste sea. This Biblical language would justify Marlowe's manner of annihilating the Babylonians. He orders his men to drown all, man, woman and child in the lake (2T. 5.1.169-170), a deed which makes the waters swell up over the banks (2T. 5.1.204) and unfurl over the city. Desolation, devastation, both are the lot of this ill-famed city.

Thus, it would seem that Marlowe made use of the information which historians of antiquity could offer about the story of Alexander and the fate of cities which he found on his path. It would also appear that the dramatist fashioned

---

318. There are many references to the Medes and the Persians destroying Babylon: see G.V., Jer. 50:3, n. (c); G.V., Jer. 50:41, n. (c); G.V., Jer. 51:20, n. (n); G.V., Jer. 51:42, n. (z); B.V., Hab. 2:7, n. (e); G.V., Isa. 21:1, n. (b); G.V., Isa. 33:4, n. (i).

319. See B.V., G.V., Jer. 50:9.

320. See B.V., G.V., Jer. 50:3, 9, 41; B.V., G.V., Jer. 51:48; B.V., G.V., Jer. 6:22.

321. See B.V., G.V., Jer. 51:42. See also B.V., G.V., Amos 8:8; 9:5.

322. See B.V., G.V., Ezek. 26:19. See also B.V., G.V., Hab. 2:14. Obviously, the unfurling waters of the sea are seen as a cleasing agent wiping out all traces of idols and idolatrous cults. The Biblical annotator uses this image in connection with the Gospel as well: "The Gospel is compared to hayle and fluddes, for that it breaketh downe and carieth away idolatrie and superstition, wherein men do trust in vayne": B.V., Isa. 28:17, n. (b).

323. Babylon "shalbe cast out and drowned": B.V., G.V., Amos 8:8. The annotator adds this: "The inhabitantes of the land shalbe drowned": B.V., Amos 8:8, n. (c). See also B.V., G.V., Amos 9:5; G.V., Jer. 51:64.

324. See B.V., Eoclus. 40:13. See also B.V., Jer. 51:64.

the fall and destruction of Babylon from the Biblical interpretation of the event, a fact which points once more to the influence of Biblical material on the dramatist's work. If one takes into account that the fall of Babylon stands out as a great event in the Bible;[325] that its fall is symbolic of the scourging effects of the wrath of God or of his scourges;[326] that the destruction of Babylon stands for the destruction of evil in all its forms in the whole world;[327] then the conquest of the city by Tamburlaine as the end of the hero's career is a fitting climax to his mission as a scourge and, at the same time, opens the door to the possibility of his being scourged in his turn. If one remembers the significance and proportion that the destruction of Babylon takes in the Book of Revelation;[328] then the spiritual meaning of this incident in the play, as well as that of the principal agent Tamburlaine in the incident, expands into dimensions which extend through time and space, through the centuries of history and to the ends of the world into a timeless infinity. The destruction of this city symbolizes the destruction of all objectionable elements in the history of Israel or of redeemed mankind. In this perspective, Tamburlaine stands beyond the limits of time and outside the confines of geographical space.

---

325. The Bible speaks of how the noise at the fall of Babylon shall move the earth and how the cry shall be heard among the "Gentiles" or "nations": see B.V., G.V., Jer. 50:46. All who go by Babylon shall be abashed and shall wonder at all her plagues: see B.V., Jer. 50:13.

326. The Scourge of God "smote the people in angre with a continual plague, and ruled the nations in wrath: if anie were persecuted, he did not let": G.V., Isa. 14:6. This is complemented by the following note: "He suffred all violence and iniuries to be done": G.V., Isa. 14:6, n. (d). Babylon is made desolate "because of the wrath of the Lord": G.V., Jer. 50:13. The Bishops Bible has this version of the same verse: When the Lord "is wroth, [he] smiteth the people with continual strokes and in wrath raigneth ouer the heathen, whom he persecuteth without compassion": B.V., Isa. 14:6.

327. "And I wyl visite the wyckednesse of the worlde": B.V., Isa. 13:11. The annotator adds this: "He compareth Babylon to the whole worlde, because they so estemed them selues by reason of their great empire": G.V., Isa. 13:11, n. (i).

328. See B.V., G.V., Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 18:2.

The mission of a scourge, according to Tamburlaine, is to harbor "revenge, war, death and cruelty" (2T. 1.3.78) and to apply himself "In war, in blood, in death, in crueltie" (2T. 4.1.156).[329] There is no doubt about Tamburlaine's meeting with these expectations. If Tamburlaine's ambitions as a man are to move upwards by "princely deeds" (1T. 2.7.32) and "soare above the highest sort" (1T. 2.7.33) to reach superhuman heights of ambition or perfection, then the road to these heights for him as a scourge is none other than to wage war ceaselessly, to shed blood profusely, and to inflict death upon all who challenge him. In these respects, Tamburlaine meets the requirements of a scourge to perfection. Indeed he combines his human ambitions and his duties as a scourge marvellously well. As a "terrour of the world", his fame spans the earth and, already in the first part of the play, it is even spread "through hell and up to heaven" (1T. 5.1.467). But what about the problem of cruelty?

Tamburlaine was one of those "Scythians rude and barbarous" (1T. 3.3.271) for whom Zabina had nothing but scorn, one of "these barbarous Scythians full of cruelty" (2T. 3.4.19) who terrify Olympia. The Scythians were proverbially known for their cruelty. Indeed, according to Biblical authors[330] and other writers as well, the cruelty of the Scythians was a norm by which the cruelty of others could be measured. But, it must be pointed out, Tamburlaine does not dominate the play as a Scythian but as a Scourge of God. This is especially so in the second part of the play where, as it happens, the most gruesome deeds of cruelty are to be found. Critics have accused the dramatist of having gory, sadistic inclinations, of playing up to the supposedly similar tastes of the Elizabethan audiences who were perpetually insatiate of the horror tales of

---

329. Cf. these with the things "created for the wicked" (G.V., Ecclus. 40:10). God uses "death and blood,and strife, and swords, oppression, famine, destruction, and punishment" as his means of scourging: G.V., Ecclus. 40:9. Are Tamburlaine's methods so very different from these?

330. Ptolemeus brings about the condemnation of those poor men "whiche if they had tolde their cause, yea before the Scythians they shoulde haue benne iudged innocent": B.V., 2 Macc. 4:47. By this comparison, the Biblical author wishes to show how cruel Ptolemeus was.

tortures and the gruesome spectacles of public executions. There are a few references to contemporary practices of torture in the play. The captured Bajazet alludes to some of these. "First shalt thou rip my bowels with thy sword, / And sacrifice my heart to death and hell", (1T. 4.2.16-17), says he to Tamburlaine who proposes to use him as his footstool. Olympia is terrified at the prospects of being put to the wheel by Scythians (2T. 3.4.21). Tamburlaine threatens Callapine in these words:

> Goe villaine, cast thee headlong from a rock,
> Or rip thy bowels, and rend out thy heart,
> T'appease my wrath, or else Ile torture thee,
> Searing thy hatefull flesh with burning yrons,
> And drops of scalding lead, while all thy joints
> Be rackt and beat asunder with the wheele.
> (2T. 3.5.120-125).

Cosroe hopes to send Tamburlaine to hell "where flames shall ever feed upon his soule" (1T. 2.6.8). Orcanes visualizes "legions of devils"who,

> All brandishing their brands of quenchlesse fire,
> Streching their monstrous pawes, grin with their teeth,
> And guard the gates to entertaine his soule,
> (2T. 3.5.25, 28-30)

waiting to welcome the dead Tamburlaine. Bajazet resorts to the myths about Hercules to formulate the kind of evil he wishes to fall upon Tamburlaine (1T. 4.4.17-22). All of these references to tortures represent a medley of practices which could have been derived from the New Testament, from the rites of the pagan cults of the Amerindian cultures in which Marlowe is said to have shown interest,[331] from methods of execution carried on in Marlowe's time, from the Christian lore about the tortures of hell, and from the treatment inflicted upon inmates of the prisons at the time. These forms of torture exercised in this world or in the Christian and mythological afterworld, do not by any means sum up the brutality displayed in the play. However, not all the deeds of cruelty in the play were of

---

331. See the Baines Report in Paul H. Kocher, Christopher Marlowe: A Study of his Thought, Learning, and Character (New York, 1946), pp. 33-36.

Marlowe's own making. Some of these made their way into Tamburlaine via the accounts of the chroniclers, even though they lack historical evidence to support them. Obviously, some factors influenced the imaginations of the various chroniclers; possibly, the same factors influenced the dramatist in his option to include as many evidences of cruelty in the play as he did and in his choices of other cruel practices which he incorporates in his drama. Could the Scriptures have been one of these influencial factors?

There is a whole range of calamities and disasters which people guilty of idolatry, of stubbornness, of pride, and of resistance to the will of God or of his agents might be led to expect from scourges according to the standards set by numerous Biblical episodes. Victims, especially those guilty of idolatry, were repeatedly warned by God himself, or by his ministers, of the evils they might expect if they refused to alter their ways. If warnings failed to effect a change, there were many examples of deeds performed by scourges to remind them of what could happen. In fact, the history of the chosen people in the Bible is largely made up of episodes by which the wayward were meant to be scourged. The idolatrous aspects of the Turks in the play has already been analysed.[332] Consequently, one might expect them to be treated in a manner similar to that experienced by the idolaters of the Bible. It must be pointed out once more that the treatment meted out to Bajazet and Zabina in the play was not entirely of Marlowe's invention but could be derived largely from contemporary accounts. These accounts made much of the fact that Tamburlaine had used Bajazet as a footstool to climb onto his horse, that he had reduced him to the level of a beast, and that he had forced him to follow his armies and be exposed to the ridicule of the onlookers. Indeed, Marlowe's treatment of Bajazet and Zabina in the play is a mitigated version of what the chroniclers related about the two captive Turks.[333]

---

332. See above, ch. 3.

333. The Lord of Israel warns his people in these words: "Therefore, shalt thou serue thyne enimie, whiche the Lorde shal sende vpon thee, in hunger, and thirst, in nakednesse, and in neede of al thinges; and he shal put a yoke of iron vpon thy necke, untyl he haue brought thee to nought": B.V., Deut. 28:48. This threat seems to have caught the imagination of some chroniclers and determined the fate of Bajazet and his queen as they describe it in their accounts.

It has been pointed out that the fate of the conquered Bajazet and his queen, as told by the chroniclers and therefore by Marlowe, bears little resemblance to the historical facts about the captivity of these Turkish monarchs. Indeed, Timur, is believed to have displayed reverence and respect for his illustrious prisoners. Clearly, the relationship between Tamburlaine and his captive was probably moulded into patterns drawn from Scripture. Tamburlaine's intervention in the affairs of Eastern Europe led the chroniclers to refocus the warrior within the perspective of a providential agent sent by God like the Biblical scourges. Did the chroniclers, by the same token, presume Tamburlaine's captives to bear the traits of the Biblical victims of such divine agents? Did Marlowe preserve or alter these traits or invent new ones?

One promise repeatedly made by God to his warrior or scourge was that he would be so successful that he would thoroughly defeat his enemy; he would tread on his foes,[334] literally on the neck of his victims.[335] The enemy would be forced

---

334. The God of Israel uses this image to illustrate how he himself or through the action of his scourges he will overcome and treat his enemies: see B.V., G.V., Job 30:12; G.V., Ps. 18:42; B.V., G.V., Ps. 44:5; B.V., G.V., Isa. 10:6; 63:3, 6; B.V., Lam. 3:34; B.V., G.V., Mic. 5:8; B.V., Hab. 2:7, gloss; B.V., G.V., Mal. 4:3; 4 Esdras 16:70. Cyrus is said to be treading upon princes as upon clay: see B.V., G.V., Isa. 41:25 and G.V., Isa. 41:25, n. (u). So does Alexander the Great: see B.V., G.V., Dan. 8:7 and B.V., Dan. 8:7, n. (h). About the power of David illustrated in this way, see B.V., G.V., 2 Sam. 8:2; 22:39, 48. God himself is said to have trodden down the enemies of Israel: see B.V., G.V., Ps. 60:12. The power of Christ as king is described in similar terms: see B.V., G.V., 1 Cor. 15:25. For variations on the use of this image, see B.V., G.V., 1 Kgs. 5:3; 2 Kgs. 9:33; Ps. 8:6; 18:38.

335. God promises Israel: "Thy hand shalbe in the necke of thine enimies ...": B.V., Gen. 49:8. The annotator says this promise "was verified in Dauid and Christ": G.V., Gen. 49:8, n. (g). Here is how Joshua treats his captive kings: "And when they hadde brought out those kynges vnto Iosuah, Iosuah called for al the menne of Israel, and sayd vnto the chiefe of the menne of warre whiche went with hym: Comme neare, and put your feete vpon the neckes of these kynges. And they came neare, and put thayr feete vpon the neckes of them": B.V., Josh. 10:24. The annotator makes the following comment: "By this Iosuah woulde encourage his captaynes, and signifie vnto them, what victorie they shoulde looke for the rest of ... thayr enimies seeying kynges are thus by them serued": B.V., Josh. 10:24, n. (e). David says: "And thou hast geuen me the neckes of myne enimies that I myght destroy them, that hate me": B.V., 2 Sam. 22:41. See also B.V., and G.V., Ps. 18:40.

to crouch[336] and kneel[337] to their conqueror, to stoop under the weight of his power,[338] to yield their necks to him,[339] to bear an iron yoke around their necks.[340] The most important and powerful image illustrating the depth of humiliation to which the victim would be degraded was the one of the enemy being used as a footstool. This image occurs many times in the Bible. In fact, this is the one used to show most effectively the power which David would acquire as God's warrior and which would be enjoyed by Christ, his prototype,[341] as well as by Christ's representative on earth.[342] Christ was destined to treat all his foes as footstools, to conquer all enemies including death,[343] the only foe which Tamburlaine fails to

---

336. The power and prestige of Zadok, a figure of Christ, (See B.V., 1 Sam. 2:35, n. (z).) is illustrated in the following verse: "And al that are leaft in thyne house, shal comme and crouche to him for a peece of siluer ...": B.V., 1 Sam. 2:36.

337. The respect and reverence which the enemies and kings will show towards Solomon, another figure of Christ, is described in terms of kneeling before him and worshipping him: see B.V., G.V., Ps. 72:9 and Ps. 72:11. See also B.V., Isa. 60:14.

338. Job speaks of "mighty helpes" stooping under the wrathful God: see B.V., Job. 9:13. The wrathful God made the chosen men of Israel to stoop: see B.V., Ps. 78:31. According to Isaiah, enemies have said to Israel: "Stoupe downe, that we may goe ouer thee, make thy body euen with the grounde, and as the streete to goe vpon": B.V., Isa. 51:23. Solomon's "enimies shal licke the dust": see B.V., Ps. 72:9. Isaiah says this about captured kings: "They shal fal before thee with their faces flat vpon the earth and licke vp the dust of thy feete": B.V., Isa. 49:23. Cf. with Marlowe's following lines when Tamburlaine judges Bajazet "Unworthy to imbrace or touch the ground / That beares the honor of /his/ royall waight": 1T. 4.2.20-21. Israel's enemies shall fall down at her feet: see B.V., Isa. 60:14. See also B.V., Gen. 49:8; B.V., G.V., Isa. 45:14.

339. See above, p. 592 and n. 335. See below, n. 340.

340. See B.V., G.V., Deut. 28:48. The oppression exercised by Nabuchadnezzar is spoken of in terms of people putting "their neckes vnder the yoke of the kyng of Babylon": B.V., Jer. 27:11. This oppression is sanctioned by the God of Israel who says: "I wyl put a yoke of iron vpon the necke of al this people that they may serue Nabuchodonosor..." B.V., Jer. 28:14.

341. "Sit thou on my right hand, vntyl I make thyne enimies thy footestoole": B.V., Ps. 110:1. See also B.V., G.V., Matt. 22:44; Luke 20:42, 43; Acts 2:34, 35; Heb. 1:13; 10:13.

342. See Doctor Faustus, lines 868-876, 915-921.

343. "The last enemie that shalbe destroyed is death": B.V., 1 Cor. 15:26. See also Scofield, ed. cit., n. 2, pp. 767-768, n. 1; p. 1016, n. 1.

overcome. One can readily detect the source of the legendary accounts which describe Tamburlaine using Bajazet as a foostool. Biblical episodes of victims receiving their due punishment had probably shaped the story of the relationship between Tamburlaine and Bajazet. Marlowe preserves this image, a most powerful and effective one from the dramatic point of view. The Elizabethan audience undoubtedly grasped the full significance of Tamburlaine's gesture when he climbed on Bajazet and used him as his footstool. This gesture fulfilled more than just a dramatic function in the play. It projected Tamburlaine's treatment of Bajazet into a context of Biblical meaning and dimension. It confirmed Tamburlaine in his role of Scourge of God and set the stamp of divine approval on whatever he would choose to do in this role. At the same time, it set the defeat of Bajazet within a divine plan. Timur's victory over Bajazet had been a proof of divine intervention on behalf of the Christians while Bajazet's infamy paralleled that met with by the idolatrous of the Bible. Much is made of the victor treading upon the enemy in the play. Tamburlaine is proud that "the majestie of heaven" can "beholde / Their Scourge and Terrour treade on Emperours" (1T. 4.2.31-32). Zabina is revolted at the sight of Tamburlaine "treading him beneath [his] loathsome feet / Whose feet the kings of Affrica have kiss't" (1T. 4.2.64-65). The Turk warns Tamburlaine of his coming fall "For treading on the back of Bajazeth" (1T. 4.2.77). These are possibly normal reactions to expect from the two victimized characters in this scene, but nevertheless, they do underline the fate of the victims of a scourge of God by Biblical standards. Theridamas even describes his master as one who "treadeth Fortune underneath his feete" (2T. 3.4.52) and possibly in this same way "makes the mighty God of armes his slave" (2T. 3.4.53). Marlowe also incorporates the other Biblical references describing the treatment of enemies mentioned above. The victor forces the victim to stoop under his power in the play. Tamburlaine urges Bajazet, who bears the honour of Tamburlaine's royal weight (1T. 4.2.21),[344] "Stoop villaine, stoope, stoope for

---

344. See also above, p. 593 and n. 338.

so he bids ..." (1T 4.2.22). In the context of the scene, Marlowe probably wishes to emphasize in this way the humiliation to which Tamburlaine is subjecting Bajazet. Tamburlaine again uses this image when he encourages his sons to imitate his cruelty. To the Turkish kings he has enslaved, he proudly boasts: "See now ye slaves, my children stoops your pride" (2T 4.1.76). Tamburlaine anticipates meeting Callapine on the battlefield in order "That we may tread upon his captive necke, / And treble all his fathers slaveries" (2T 3.2.157-158). The dramatist links up the fate of Callapine with that of Bajazet his father; each enhances the degrading effects of the other. Bajazet uses the image of the enslaving yoke to describe his status as a fallen monarch:

> O dreary Engines of my loathed sight,
> That sees my crowne, my honor, and my name
> Thrust under yoke and thraldom of a thiefe.
> (1T 5.1.259-261)

Tamburlaine promises Bajazet's son: "Sirha, Callapine. Ile hang a clogge about your necke for running away againe" (2T 3.5.100-101), alluding to Callapine's successful escape from Tamburlaine's captivity. Early in the play, Usumcasane anticipates the sight of kings kneeling at Tamburlaine's feet (1T 1.2.58), kings who shall crouch unto their conquering swords (1T 1.2.220). In the second part of the play, Tamburlaine orders his captured kings: "Now crouch ye, kings of greatest Asia" (2T 4.3.98). Theridamas plans to force the king of Natolia to kneel before Tamburlaine's feet (2T 1.3.217). In keeping with his boundless ambitions, Tamburlaine even hopes to "wake blacke Jove to crouch and kneele" to him (2T 5.1.98). Thus there appear in the play, especially in the second part, expressions and ideas depicting the attitudes of the victor towards his victims which could be borrowed from the Bible. These are used to enhance and sustain the image of the victim humiliated by the victor, both in the Bible and in Marlowe's play.

The Biblical text warns the idolater of other harrowing pains and tortures to come if he does not amend his ways. At the mercy of the scourge, kings will

lose their name and dignities from under heaven.[345] The fate of these victims will be wondered at, spoken of, and jested at among all nations whither the Lord will carry them.[346] Victims will burn with hunger,[347] be consumed with heat[348] and with grief,[349] be crushed with the bitter sense of the inevitable destruction to come,[350] and wish for death as the only escape.[351] The Deuteronomist describes how crucially painful the situation will become. Husbands will be grieved to look upon the miseries of their wives and vice versa.[352] These conditions will be especially distressing for the men and women "tender and exceding deintie".[353] Victims will be reduced to eating their own flesh,[354] or, as the Deuteronomist says, to eat their own arm.[355] In short,

---

345. "And he shal deliuer theyr kinges into thyne hande and thou shalt destroy theyr name from vnder heauen": B.V., Deut. 7:24.

346. See B.V., G.V., Deut. 28:37. The Psalmist has this verse: "Thou hast made vs (to be) a fable among the heathens: (and to be suche) that the people shake their head at vs": B.V., Ps., T.H., 44:15. The Geneva Bible has this version of the same verse: "Thou makest vs a prouerbe among the nations and a nodding of the head among the people": G.V., Ps. 44:14. See also G.V., Deut. 28:25, n. (l). "Menne shal speake of the force of thy terrible actes": B.V., Ps. T.H., 145:6. See also B.V., C.P.V., and G.V., Ps. 145:6. Men shall also speak of God's 'terrible iudgements against the wicked": G.V., Ps. 145:6, n. (d). They shall be reviled, abhorred, shamed, and confounded: see B.V., Jer. 44:12. "They shalbe a detestation and an astonishment and a curse and a reproche": G.V., Jer. 44:12.

347. "They shalbe burnt with hunger": B.V., G.V., Deut. 32:24. See also B.V., G.V., Deut. 28:48; Isa. 5:13; 8:21; Jer. 16:4; 18:21; 21:9; 24:10; 27:8; 42:17, 22; 44:12, 13, 27; 4 Esdras 15:5; 16:20; 39:29; Ecclus. 40:9. See also B.V., G.V., Ezek. 4:17.

348. "They shalbe ... consumed with heat ...": B.V., Deut. 32:24. See also B.V., G.V., Deut. 28:48; Isa. 5:13; Ezek. 4:17.

349. See B.V., G.V., Ps. 31:9; 4 Esdras 16:20.

350. See B.V., G.V., Deut. 32:24.

351. "If thou deale thus with me, kyl me, I pray thee, ... that I see not my wretchednesse": B.V., Num. 11:15. "I had rather dye, then to se my grief and miserie thus daily increase ...": G.V., Num. 11:15, n. (i). See B.V., Ps. T.H., 22:15, n. (b) and G.V., Ps. 22:15, n. (i); B.V., G.V., Jer. 8:3.

352. "So that the man (that is tender and exceding deintie among you) shalbe grieued at ... his wife ...": G.V., Deut. 28:54. "Yea, and the woman that is so tender and delicate, ... shalbe grieued to looke on her husbande ...": B.V., Deut. 28:56.

353. G.V., Deut. 28:54.

354. See B.V., G.V., Deut. 28:55. See also B.V., G.V., Isa. 49:26.

355. "Euerie one shal eat the flesh of his owne arme": G.V., Isa. 9:20.

captives will be handled "marueylous rigorously, and cruelly"[356] and made sport of, Samson being the standard example of such treatment.[357] Marlowe touches upon all of these aspects of suffering which are the lot of the victims of the Biblical scourge. Tamburlaine tauntingly brings home to Bajazet that all his royal prestige has faded out into non-existence:

> Thy names and tytles, and thy dignities,
> Are fled from Bajazeth, and remaine with me,
> That will maintaine it against a world of Kings.
> (1T. 4.2.79-81)

Consequently, Callapine understands the defeat of Tamburlaine principally as the means of rehabilitating the fame and honour of his father. Tamburlaine's defeat would

> Do us such honor and supremacie,
> Bearing the vengeance of our fathers wrongs,
> As all the world should blot our dignities
> Out of the booke of base borne infamies.
> (2T. 3.1.16-19)

Zabina feels deeply humiliated at the thought that the shame incurred by the defeat of her husband is known throughout the whole world. She cringes at the thought

> That all the world will see and laugh to scorne,
> The former triumphes of our mightines,
> In this obscure infernall servitude.
> (1T. 5.1.252-254)

Bajazet voices the agony of their captivity in terms of the pangs of hunger which gnaw at them,[358] of the consuming heat of thirst which dries their sinews and their veins hard and dry.[359] Both are overawed by the turn their destiny has suddenly

---

356. B.V., Deut. 28:48, n. (1).

357. See B.V., G.V., Judges 16:25.

358. See 1T. 4.4.94, 98; 5.1.236, 273. Tamburlaine says of the starving Zabina that "if she live but a while longer, shee will fall into a consumption with freatting": 1T. 4.4.49-50. Cf. with "When he shalbe hungrie, he shal euen freat him self": G.V., Isa. 8:21.

359. See 1T.4.4.94; 5.1.276-277. Cf. "My fleash is dried vp for want of fatnesse": B.V., Ps., T.H., 109:24 (Ps., C.P.V., 109:23).

taken. Bajazet's mental landscape is immersed in "ugly darknesse" filled "with tempests wrappt in pitchy clouds" and "never fading mistes";[360] he wishes for death as an end to his woes (1T. 5.1.238). Zabina equally despairs of a happy issue to emerge out of the present state of things (1T. 5.1.249-250).

The chroniclers emphasize how the humiliations to which the captors put Bajazet's queen was a source of bitter grief for him. Marlowe has incorporated in his play the mutual sympathy Bajazet and Zabina have for each other in their misery. One of the most poignant passages expressing Bajazet's grief caused by the servile conditions of his queen is the following which he addresses to his eyes:

> You see my wife, my Queene and Emperesse,
> Brought up and propped by the hand of fame,
> Queen of fifteene contributory Queens,
> Now throwen to roomes of black abjection,
> Smear'd with blots of basest drudgery,
> And Villanesse to shame, disdaine, and misery.
> (1T. 5.1.264-269)

The sharp agony of his grief breaks out in his "O poore Zabina, O my Queen, my Queen" (1T. 5.1.275). Zabina's concern for her husband is just as great as his for her. The condition of bondage of both is a mutual source of suffering for each as the Biblical text said it would be for the victims of scourges working in the interest of the wrath of God. Marlowe does not overlook the fact that such conditions of captivity are especially painful to those coming from a refined background. He does not ignore the possibility that famine and hunger could become so desperate that victims could be ready to eat their own flesh. He alludes to these Biblical expressions of extreme stress in the dialogue of the banquet scene. Amid much bantering about each eating the other, amongst derisive remarks, crude in tone and meaning to say the least, Tamburlaine mocks and makes fun of the two Turks (1T. 4.4.36-56). He taunts the famished Bajazet: "Why fall you not too, are you so daintily brought up, you cannot eat your owne flesh?" (1T. 4.4.36-37) or threatens him in these words: "I will make thee slice the brawnes of thy armes into carbonadoes and eat them" (1T. 4.4.43-44). There is no denying

---

360. See 1T. 5.1.294, 295, 296.

that Tamburlaine, who had already made Cosroe king "to make ⌈him⌉ sport" (1T. 2.5.101), brings in Bajazet and Zabina "to make a goodly showe at a banquet" (1T. 4.4.57-58) and to be used as sport for the amusement of his guests. Like their Biblical counterparts, who were put through the harrowing pangs of hunger and thirst, who were forced to eat their own flesh, the flesh of their own arm, Bajazet and Zabina are reduced to extreme conditions and die in the land of their captivity.[361] As a climax to his experience of degrading royalty, Tamburlaine can terrify the captured kings of the second part of the play by reminding them of "the paines ⌈his⌉ rigour shall inflict" (2T. 4.1.184). The above comparisons which can be made between Marlowe's lines and the Biblical texts mentioned above show that the dramatist did not refrain from drawing upon the ways the Biblical scourge dealt with his victims to portray the deeds of his hero in his role as a scourge of God.

It would seem that Marlowe's use of the Bible to illustrate Tamburlaine's cruelties does not stop here. Indeed, some Biblical scourges could have outdone Tamburlaine in matters of exercising cruelty. The Bible describes the deeds of David, the great and holy leader of Israel, in these words: "And he carryed away the people, ... and put them vnder sawes, and vnder iron harrowes, and vnder arcs of iron, and thrust them into the tylekil: this dyd he with all the cities of the chyldren of Ammon".[362] This treatment is assessed by the Biblical annotator as properly "recompensing the cruel enimies of God with cruel death".[363] Tamburlaine was possibly reproducing such rigours in the treatment of his captives.

Tamburlaine's use of the Turkish kings as beasts of burden to draw his

---

361. "For he shal dye in the place whereunto he is led captive, and shal see this land no more": B.V., Jer. 22:12.

362. B.V., G.V., 2 Sam. 12:31. "And he brought out the people that were in it and tormented them with sawes and harrowes of iron, and with other sharpe instrumentes, and so dealt Dauid with al the cities of the chyldren of Ammon": B.V., 1 Chr. 20:3.

363. B.V., 2 Sam. 12:31, n. (o).

chariot has prevoked numerous comments about Marlowe's love of debasing brutality. Three times in the play does Tamburlaine appear on the stage riding in his chariot drawn by harnessed kings.[364] Marlovian critics have suggested that the dramatist might have derived his inspirations for those scenes from two dumb shows which George Gascoigne had incorporated in his play Jocasta which had already appeared in 1566. In this play, the first act is introduced by a dumb show portraying Ambition being drawn in her chariot by horsed kings[365] while the dumb show prior to the fifth act illustrates the unpredictable and harsh fate of kings at the mercy of fickle Fortune.[366] That Marlowe could have been inspired by Jocasta is highly possible. However, the image of horsed kings is not alien to the Biblical text, not even to the mission of the Biblical scourge. From the dramatic point of view, this scene would seem to fill a role in the second part of the play parallel to the one of Bajazet being degraded to the level of a beast in the first part. It may be said in passing that both Bajazet and the Turkish kings may be viewed as former scourges now being scourged by Tamburlaine. However, the chroniclers, who made Tamburlaine treat Bajazet as a beast, possibly had been influenced by tales about Nabuchadnezzar who himself had been scourged by being reduced to a beast roaming the fields for his food.[367] Being degraded

---

364. See 2T. 4.3.s.d.; 5.1.62 s.d.; 5.3.41 s.d.

365. The dumb show in Jocasta is described as follows: "Firste before the beginning of the first Acte, did sounde a dolefull and straunge noyse of violles, Cythren, Bandurion, and such like, during the whiche, there came in vpon the Stage a king with an Imperial crown vpon his head, very richely apparelled: a Scepter in his righte hande, a Mounde with a Crosse in his lefte hande, sitting in a Chariote very richely furnished, drawne in by foure Kinges in their Dublettes and Hosen, with Crownes also upon their heades. Representing vnto us Ambition, by the historie of Sesostres, king of Egypt, who beeing in his time and reigne a mightie Conquerour, yet not content to have subdued many princes, and taken from them their kingdomes and dominions, did in like manner cause those Kinges whome he had so overcome, to draw in his Chariote like Beastes and Oxen, thereby to content his unbrideled ambitious desire ...": John W. Cunliffe, ed., The Complete Works of George Gascoigne (Cambridge,1907), vol. 1, p. 246.

366. A very mournful melody is heard while Fortune comes on the stage all dressed in white and accompanied on her right hand by two kings wearing their crowns and on her left by two slaves. She transforms the kings into slaves by taking their diadems to crown the two slaves whom she makes kings, symbolizing, thereby, the deeds of unstable Fortune: see ibid., p. 308.

367. See Dan. 4:32-33. Sennacherib is also compared to a "furious beast": see G.V., Isa. 37:29, n. (u).

in this way either by madness, as in the case of the king of Babylon, or by the captors, as in the play, were part and parcel of the same kind of scourging. Possibly the Elizabethans easily understood the associations which the chroniclers had made in their descriptions of the captive Bajazet as well as the ones the dramatist was now making in this scene of the horsed kings. Whatever motives the dramatist may have had in mind, it might be unfair to accuse him of having had an imagination which revelled in brutality of this kind. He could have drawn this idea from other sources besides the play Jocasta or his own genius.

The Lord of Israel had warned his people of disadvantages if they insisted on having a king: "This shal be the manner of the kyng, that shal raigne ouer you: he wyl take your sonnes, and put them to his charettes, and make his horsemen of them, to run before his charet",[368] a prophecy which was made a fact by David's sons Absalom[369] and Adonijah.[370] David, before his sons, had already forced conquered kings to serve him.[371] Yet, possibly, Marlowe wished to attenuate Tamburlaine's cruelty by having this idea of horsing kings first appear on the lips of Bajazet (1T 4.2.77-78), one of those Turks notorious for their cruelty. In this perspective, Tamburlaine's deed became another instance of the evil wished to others falling upon one's self, of curses striking the curser. This would place Tamburlaine among the elect.

Marlowe expounds on the theme of horsed kings. This theme opens the way to the bridle imagery, an imagery again Biblical in nature and origin. Biblical authors frequently resort to the metaphorical use of the bridle to express the notion of checking and controlling.[372] God bridles the rage of tyrants;[373]

---

368. B.V., 1 Sam. 8:11.

369. See B.V., G.V., 2 Sam. 15:1.

370. See B.V., G.V., 1 Kgs. 1:5.

371. See B.V., G.V., 2 Sam. 10:19.

372. "They wyl not be bridled with lawes": B.V., Ps..T.H., 73:4, n. (b). David took the "bridel of bondage out of the hand of the Philistines": B.V., 2 Sam. 8:1. See also B.V., G.V., Isa. 30:28.

373. "I wil bridel thy rage and turne thee to and fro as pleaseth me": says

(continued overleaf ....)

governors bridle their private affections to prevent them from interfering with their duty;[374] all are expected to bridle their passions.[375] However, the image appears in its strongest and most meaningful sense in the letters of James. The apostle clearly states that one must bridle his tongue to keep it from evil.[376] To bridle the tongue is equivalent to bridling the whole body.[377] James goes on to explain: "Beholde, we put bits into the horses mouthes that they shulde obey vs, and we turne about all their bodies".[378] The use of the bridle and bit is symbolic of the perfect control one should exercise on one's self or of the total subjection and degradation imposed by a force external to one's self. The God of Israel resorts to this image to illustrate the complete mastery he wishes to have over the enemy: "I wyl put ... my byt in thy lippes".[379] Occasionally, the image is expanded to include the jaws and the teeth. God will sift out the good from the

---

373. Continued .... the God of Israel: G.V., 2 Kgs. 19:28, n. (s). "Thus the Lord can pul backe the bridel of the tyrants, and deliuer his out of the lions mouthe": G.V., 1 Sam. 23:27, n. (k). "Thogh Saul haue neuer so great power, yet I knowe that thou doest bridel him": G.V., Ps. 59:9, n. (g). For God bridling the rage of Cambises and that of other kings of Persia by means of Alexander, the king of Macedonia, see Dan. 10:20, n. (c). For the providence of God ruling "the Kings by a secret bridel that they can not do what thei list them selues", see G.V., Dan. 11:27, n. (f). For God bridling "the aucthour of al synne vpon earth", see B.V., 4 Esdras 16:51. For God bridling the rage of men that they shall not compass their purpose, see G.V., Ps. 76:10, n. (g). God "brideleth their impaciencie, which in aduersitie and trouble murmure against God and wil not tarie his pleasure: ...": G.V., Isa. 45:9, n. (l). See also G.V., Ps. 32:9, n. (i).

374. "There is no thing harder for them, that are in autoritie, than to bridel their affections, and followe good counsel": G.V., 1 Kgs. 12:9, n. (c). See also G.V., 1 Kgs. 12:16, n. (f).

375. "So hard a thing it is to bridel our impaciencie in affliction that the saincts colde not ouercome the same": G.V., 1 Kgs. 19:4, n. (c).

376. See Jas. 1:26. See also B.V., G.V., Ps. 39:1.

377. "If a man sinne not in woorde, the same is a perfect man and able also to bridle al the body": B.V., Jas. 3:2.

378. G.V., Jas. 3:3.

379. B.V., 2 Kgs. 19:28. "I wyl put ... my bridle bit in the iawes of thee, and turne thee about euen the same way thou camest": B.V., Isa. 37:29. See also G.V., Isa. 37:29.

bad by using "a bridle to cause them to erre in the chawes of the people".[380] God tells his people: "And I wil destroye thee, and put hokes in thy chawes, and I wil bring thee forthe, ...".[381] By this imagery, he reveals to what extent he plans to curb the action of the enemy and, at the same time, destroy the rebellious through their action. To control by the jaws clearly means to perceive and treat man as a beast or at least as a slave, as opposed to treating man as a human. This is made obvious in the following passage: "I led them with cordes of a man, euen the bandes of loue, and I was to them, as he that taketh off the yoke from their iawes".[382] To break the jaws of the unrighteous is to disable him.[383] Tyranny is presented under the guise of "a generacion, whose teeth are as swordes and their chawes as kniues to eat vp the afflicted ... and the poore among men".[384] Elsewhere in Scripture, the breaking of the teeth means the removal of all means to hurt.[385]

The dramatist makes use of almost all of these aspects of the bridle imagery. Clearly, Tamburlaine means to control his Turkish kings in this crude and cruel manner as his threats reveal:

> Well, bark ye dogs.[386] Ile bridle al your tongues
> And bind them close with bits of burnisht steele,
> Downe to the channels of your hatefull throats,
> And with the paines my rigour shall inflict,
> Ile make ye roare, ...
> (2T. 4.1.181-185)

---

380. G.V., Isa. 30:28.

381. G.V., Ezek. 38:4.

382. G.V., Hos. 11:4.

383. "I brake also the chawes of the vnrighteous man, ...": G.V., Job. 29:17. "Thou hast broken the teeth of the vngodly": B.V., Ps. 3:7.

384. G.V., Prov. 30:14.

385. "Break their teeth, O Lorde, in their mouthes": B.V., Ps., T.H., 58:5 (Ps., C.P.V., 58:6; G.V., Ps. 58:6). This is paraphrased as follows: "Take away all occasions and meanes, whereby they hurt": G.V., Ps. 58:6, n. (e). Marlowe could also have come across this idea in one of the contemporary accounts of the career of Tamburlaine: see George Whetstones, The English Myrror ... (London, 1586), p. 16.

386. This comparison of cruel agents to dogs is present in the Bible. "They barke like a dogge": B.V., and G.V., Ps. 59:6. The Psalmist compares "their

(continued overleaf .....)

Marlowe's development of this imagery even becomes grotesque. When the kings become too outspoken, Theridamas advises Tamburlaine thus:

> Your Majesty must get some byts for these,
> To bridle their contemptuous cursing tongues,
> That like unruly never broken Jades,
> Breake through the hedges of their hateful mouthes,
> And passe their fixed boundes exceedingly.
> (2T. 4.3.43-47)

Techelles replies: "Nay, we will break the hedges of their mouths / And pul their kicking colts out of their pastures" (2T. 4.3.48-49). The kings are presented as wild unmanageable horses[387] breaking through their "hedges" or enclosures and boldly making their feelings heard and their presence felt as would horses running out of bounds. The bridle alone fails to overpower them into silence. Bits must be used to bridle not only the horse but his tongue also, as Techelles's advice implies.[388] The idea of "breaking hedges" occurs several times in the Scriptures;[389] so does the idea of breaking teeth.[390] Marlowe fuses these two concepts into an eloquent metaphor implying the total and degrading control of the victims. "Bits", "bridles", "unruly never broken Jades", "hedges", "kicking colts", "pastures": the bridle and bit metaphor has all the essentials needed to relegate the Turkish kings completely to the level of beasts at the mercy of the whims of the tyrant. Emphasis is laid on the nature of the evil of which the kings are made guilty: contempt, curses, blasphemy, all of which evils are condemned by James in his horse and bridle passage illustrating the evils of loose speech.

---

386. Continued ..... crueltie to hungrie dogs shewing that they are neuer wearie in doing euil": G.V., Ps. 59:6, n. (e). See also B.V., and G.V., Ps. 59:14.

387. The Psalmist counsels thus: "Be ye not like a horse or like a mule which haue no vnderstanding: whose mouthes must be holden with bit and bridle, lest they falle vpon thee": B.V., Ps., T.H. 32:9 and C.P.V., 32:10. See also G.V., Ps. 32:9.

388. "Pul their kicking colts out of their pastures": 2T. 4.3.49.

389. "Why hast thou then broken downe her hedge?": B.V., Ps. 80:12. See also Eccles 10:8; B.V., Ps. 89:40.

390. See above, p. 117 and n. 402; p. 603 and n. 385.

The Bible describes the destruction brought about by scourges in terms of tearing the victims piecemeal;[391] of breaking them in pieces;[392] of reducing them to dust.[393] Tamburlaine boasts he may command Bajazet be torn piecemeal (1T. 4.2. 23). Olympia expresses her fears of being tortured in this way by the Scythians (2T. 3.4.20) and Tamburlaine warns his son Amyras that if he loosens his hold on the horsed kings, "these proud rebelling Jades" might "draw /him/ peecemeale like Hyppolitus"[394] (2T. 5.3.238, 240) was. Marlowe might have taken this idea from Greek mythology but it is not impossible that the deeds of Biblical scourges could have motivated the dramatist to incorporate this imagery in his play. The same notion appears on the lips of the infuriated Bajazet who hopes that legions of devils might tear Tamburlaine in pieces (1T. 4.4.38), a power which devils were believed to have as is expressed again on the lips of the raving Zabina and as is shown in the last scene of Doctor Faustus.[395] Finally, if Marlowe drew his image about flesh being turned to dust from the Biblical text, the reader can appreciate Marlowe's poetic genius by the way he transformed the idea. The dramatist introduces a certain beauty in what is otherwise a repulsive scene of carnage. As he describes Tamburlaine's slaughter on the battlefield as "shattered lims being tosst as high as heaven" which "hang in the aire as thicke as sunny motes" (2T. 3.2.100, 101), he transmutes the dismal sight of flying limbs into pulverized sunlit dust.

---

391. "I wyl teare the fleashe of you with the thornes of the wyldernesse": B.V., Judges 8:7. The Geneva Bible glosses this passage as "beat in pieces". See also B.V., Isa.8:9; B.V., G.V., Amos 9:1; Mic. 5:8.

392. See B.V., G.V., Isa. 8:9; 14:25; Jer. 51:20; G.V., Dan. 7:7; B.V., Mic. 3:3; 4:3; G.V., 4 Esdras 16:8.

393. God "can turne all flesh into dust with the breath of his mouthe": G.V., 2 Chr. 14:11, n. (f). See also B.V., G.V., Ps. 18:42; Mal. 4:3.

394. Jump explains the allusion as follows: Hippolytus "was driving along the seacoast, when Poseidon sent a bull out of the water. The horses panicked, upset the chariot, and dragged Hippolytus along the ground until he was dead": ed. cit., n. 31, p. 194, n.

395. See 1T 5.1.311 and DF, lines 1988, 1990, 1999.

Marlowe has included other various Biblical elements. One might add that Tamburlaine, as several Biblical allusions might have suggested to the dramatist, leads, or causes to be led, his victims "sheep-like to the sword" (2T. 4.1.77).[396] Furthermore, the dramatist has incorporated into his play the Biblical notion of dead bodies being left as prey for beasts and fowls either as a fate proper to disgraced victims or as the summum of evil one could wish one's enemy.[397] The dramatist has included references to this practice and to the various meanings attached to it.[398] In his most crudely gruesome moods, Tamburlaine causes the victims of his wrath to be hung up on the walls of the city and then to be shot at, as happens to the Governor of Babylon (2T. 5.1.148 ff.) and to his jaded Turkish kings (2T. 5.1.132), or to be killed and then to be hung on the city walls as tokens of his vengeance, as he commands his men to do to the Virgins of Damascus (1T. 5.1.130-131). The harrowing cruelty in these scenes has its analogous counterpart in Scripture. David allows the Gibeonites to take seven sons of Saul and to "hang them vp vnto the Lord"[399] in order "to pacifie the Lorde"[400] who has sent a famine in the Land. Elsewhere, Mesa, a king of the pagan Moab, offers his

---

396. This idea occurs frequently in the Scriptures. It is used to describe the manner with which the people of God were led: see B.V., G.V., Ps. 77:20. It illustrates the fate of Israel: see B.V., G.V., Ps. 44:11, 22; 78:52; G.V., Jer. 12:3; 51:40; B.V., G.V., 4 Esdras 15:10; Rom. 8:36. Above all it is used to portray the attitude of Christ in face of death: see B.V., G.V., Isa. 53:7; Acts 8:32.

397. "And thy carkesse shalbe meate vnto al manner of foules of the ayre, and vnto the beastes of the earth ...": B.V., Deut. 28:26. See also B.V., G.V., Gen. 40:19; 1 Sam. 17:44, 46; 1 Kgs. 14:11; 16:4; 21:24; Ps. 79:2; Jer. 7:33; 15:3; 16:4; 19:7; 34:20; Ezek. 29:5; 32:4; 33:27; 34:5; 39:4; 2 Macc. 9:15. See 2T. 2.3.14-15; 2.3.39-39; 4.3.22-23; 5.2.16-17.

398. "Thou shalt be cursed bothe in thy life and in thy death: for the buryal is a testimonie of the resurrection, which signe for thy wickednessothou shalt lacke": G.V., Deut. 28:26, n. (m). "They shal lacke the honour of buryal in token of Gods malediction": G.V., 1 Kgs. 14:11, n. (i). "They shall dye a horrible death; no man shal weepe for them, nor bury them ...": B.V., Jer. 16:4. In Marlowe's Tamburlaine, victims "dy like beasts" (see 2T. 4.3.22) or are not worthy of a sepulchre (see 2T. 5.2.17 ff.).

399. B.V., G.V., 2 Sam. 21:6.

400. B.V., 2 Sam. 21:6, n. (e).

Marlowe has included other various Biblical elements. One might add that Tamburlaine, as several Biblical allusions might have suggested to the dramatist, leads, or causes to be led, his victims "sheep-like to the sword" (2T. 4.1.77).[396] Furthermore, the dramatist has incorporated into his play the Biblical notion of dead bodies being left as prey for beasts and fowls either as a fate proper to disgraced victims or as the summum of evil one could wish one's enemy.[397] The dramatist has included references to this practice and to the various meanings attached to it.[398] In his most crudely gruesome moods, Tamburlaine causes the victims of his wrath to be hung up on the walls of the city and then to be shot at, as happens to the Governor of Babylon (2T. 5.1.148 ff.) and to his jaded Turkish kings (2T. 5.1.132), or to be killed and then to be hung on the city walls as tokens of his vengeance, as he commands his men to do to the Virgins of Damascus (1T. 5.1.130-131). The harrowing cruelty in these scenes has its analogous counterpart in Scripture. David allows the Gibeonites to take seven sons of Saul and to "hang them vp vnto the Lord"[399] in order "to pacifie the Lorde"[400] who has sent a famine in the Land. Elsewhere, Mesa, a king of the pagan Moab, offers his

---

396. This idea occurs frequently in the Scriptures. It is used to describe the manner with which the people of God were led: see B.V., G.V., Ps. 77:20. It illustrates the fate of Israel: see B.V., G.V., Ps. 44:11, 22; 78:52; G.V., Jer. 12:3; 51:40; B.V., G.V., 4 Esdras 15:10; Rom. 8:36. Above all it is used to portray the attitude of Christ in face of death: see B.V., G.V., Isa. 53:7; Acts 8:32.

397. "And thy carkesse shalbe meate vnto al manner of foules of the ayre, and vnto the beastes of the earth ...": B.V., Deut. 28:26. See also B.V., G.V., Gen. 40:19; 1 Sam. 17:44, 46; 1 Kgs. 14:11; 16:4; 21:24; Ps. 79:2; Jer. 7:33; 15:3; 16:4; 19:7; 34:20; Ezek. 29:5; 32:4; 33:27; 34:5; 39:4; 2 Macc. 9:15. See 2T. 2.3.14-15; 2.3.39-39; 4.3.22-23; 5.2.16-17.

398. "Thou shalt be cursed bothe in thy life and in thy death: for the buryal is a testimonie of the resurrection, which signe for thy wickednesse thou shalt lacke": G.V., Deut. 28:26, n. (m). "They shal lacke the honour of buryal in token of Gods malediction": G.V., 1 Kgs. 14:11, n. (i). "They shall dye a horrible death, no man shal weepe for them, nor bury them ...": B.V., Jer. 16:4. In Marlowe's Tamburlaine, victims "dy like beasts" (see 2T. 4.3.22) or are not worthy of a sepulchre (see 2T. 5.2.17 ff.).

399. B.V., G.V., 2 Sam. 21:6.

400. B.V., 2 Sam. 21:6, n. (e).

son for a burnt offering upon a wall to pacify his gods.[401] Marlowe's scenes are not a literal reproduction of the Biblical incidents but one cannot rule out the analogies between the dramatist's creation and the Biblical scenes referred to above. The dramatist combines the gruesome practices of Tamburlaine using the captives as shooting targets, as a sport for his own amusement, with his perverse habit of inflicting cruelty upon his victims, supposedly to pacify the wrath which the three-day wait of the sieges invariably mounts up in Tamburlaine. Whether Marlowe drew these scenes from his own imagination or used his knowledge of the Bible to structure them, the fact that their Biblical counterparts were familiar to Marlowe's contemporaries could suggest why these scenes, shocking to a modern audience, could be acceptable to an Elizabethan one. Episodes of this kind were quite normal incidents within the context created by a Scourge of God. In view of all that has been explained above, one could hardly dismiss the presence of Biblical influences in Marlowe's play and still claim to hold an objective outlook with regard to its meaning as a whole.

The obvious conclusion to what has been studied about Tamburlaine as a scourge is that he emerges as a character of monstrous and beastly cruelty. The Tamburlaine of the play, grows or deteriorates, into a dehumanized entity, the influence of a scourging career he has zealously pursued, whether it be assigned from above or misleadingly self-assigned. Yet, the dramatist takes care that before his hero disappears from the scene he should come to terms with his reality as a human being. Illness forces Tamburlaine into a terminal moment of truth as he is made to realize that he is but a man and that he must die. As Tamburlaine is reduced to the limitations and failings inherent to his physical human nature, the audience would expect Tamburlaine to have some insight into his moral truth as well. However, neither now nor ever in the play does Tamburlaine manifest any uneasiness about the ethical value of his actions. Only once does he display any hesitation: the decision to slay all the Damascenes is not reached without

---

401. See B.V., G.V., 2 Kgs. 3:27 and G.V., 2 Kgs 3:27, n. (r).

some moments of inner harrowing debate (1T. 5.1.151-159). Throughout his career, Tamburlaine fights his wars and faces death without the slightest signs of regret or of repentance for any of his deeds. To the last he remains impervious to any pleas for humaneness and clemency; qualms of a guilty conscience are simply alien to his nature. Yet, Tamburlaine is accepted as a great hero of magnificence, splendour, and power. How is one expected to reconcile the greatness of Tamburlaine with the inhumanity of the man who not even once asks himself whether what he is doing is right or wrong? Critics have wondered what traits in Tamburlaine might have appealed to the Elizabethan audience. How could they have admired a character who, while he was so inhuman towards his victims on the stage, had so little regard for the beliefs and traditions cherished by his audiences? How could they have applauded a hero who stirs rebellions, promotes treachery, usurps authority, kills needlessly, and even flouts divinity, all of which were serious evils by any standards and even more so in an Elizabethan context? How did the Elizabethans solve the enigma of Tamburlaine's code of morality in the play? Why should this aspect, which presents problems to a modern audience, not seem to have troubled the Elizabethans to any remarkable degree?

If Tamburlaine is viewed as a scourge within a Moslem context, in spite of the fact that his allegiance to Islam was very slight, the problem of moral issues of guilt and repentance does not even appear. Moslem morality is not based on the ethical value of one's choices. Moral choices do not even exist in the Moslem spiritual picture. Because the committed Moslem is constantly engaged in militant action in the interest of the Islamic faith, his deeds, whatever they are, are always perceived as a service for the cause of the God of Islam as opposed to idolatry. In this perspective, because all militant action is presumably sanctioned by God, courses of behaviour never entail any sense of guilt and, consequently, never give rise to feelings of repentance. For these reasons, damnation in hell is impossible for the believing and militant Moslem. Thus, within a Moslem context and, therefore, within the

context of the play, the problem of Tamburlaine's guilt would not even appear.[402]

However, Marlowe could not ignore the fact that his play was to be measured against the moral framework and the expectations of his Christian Elizabethan audiences. How could they accept Tamburlaine's moral code by these standards? Obviously, to answer this question by saying that the play suited the tastes of the Elizabethans is to oversimplify the matter. Might it not be that the degree of difficulty which Marlowe's audience experiences in face of Tamburlaine's ethics may depend largely on the extent to which the audience refuses to perceive the theme of Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God, as central to the play and on the lack of understanding the audience has of this theme? There is reason to believe that the Elizabethan's familiarity with the vocation of a scourge might have dispelled any problem in this respect. A study of the moral norms governing the Biblical scourge, as they emerge from sixteenth-century editions of the Bible, might offer some answers to the problem of the guilt of Marlowe's Scourge of God.

For the sake of clarity, one may divide the Biblical scourges into two categories, the elect and the reprobate. God's agents are sometimes made "vnsensible without any sense or conscience of sinne";[403] as was the case for Joseph's brothers instrumental in working out the destiny of Joseph, or totally exonerated. Moses is a standard example of a scourge, elect of God. He is assigned the task of waging war against the neighbouring nations "untyl the lande be subdued before the Lorde: then ye shal returne, and be without sinne before the Lorde, and before Israel, and this lande shalbe your possession before the Lorde".[404] Indeed, this campaign is an order for "if ye wil not do so, beholde, ye haue sinned against the Lord, and be sure that your sinne wil

---

402. For a discussion on the problem of evil within an Islamic context, see Louis Gardet, Dieu et la destinée de l'homme (Paris, 1967), pp. 120 ff.

403. B.V., Gen. 37:25, n. (p).

404. B.V., Num. 32:22.

finde you out"[405] and "ye shal assuredly be punished for your sinne".[406] Thus, warfare, destruction become an obligation for Moses under the threat of punishment. Moses utterly destroys nations and territories ruled by the two kings Og and Sihon but "because this was Gods appointement, ... it may not be iudged cruel"[407] says the Biblical annotator. Future kings might resort to the practice of horsing men to their chariots for the annotator explains that "not that kings haue this autoritie by their office, but that suche as reigne in Gods wrath shulde vsurpe this ouer their brethren contrary to the Law"[408] expressed by the Deuteronomist.[409] The "ministers of God's wrath" obviously have a code of morality special to their function. Who shall then dispute the role and prerogatives of Tamburlaine, the Wrath of God, who "reigns in God's wrath" or as a "minister of God's wrath"? After he has been invested with the gift of prophecy, Saul is especially instructed as follows: "Therefore then these signes are comme vnto thee, doo what thou hast to doo, for god is with thee".[410] Saul is meant to consolidate the nation of Israel by war and destruction. David is assigned the task of fighting against those who attack God's people.[411] Of David it is said, "Because my lord fighteth the battels of the lord ... none euil hathe been founde in thee in all thy life",[412] and yet, David pursued campaigns not devoid of their share of cruelty.[413] As was pointed out before,[414]

---

405. G.V., Num. 32:23.

406. G.V., Num. 32:23, n. (i).

407. G.V., Deut. 3:6, n. (c).

408. G.V., 1 Sam. 8:11, n. (f).

409. See G.V., Deut, 17:20.

410. B.V., G.V., 1 Sam. 10:7.

411. See B.V., G.V., 1 Sam. 18:17.

412. G.V., 1 Sam. 25:28.

413. See above, p. 600 and n. 362; p. 601.

414. See above, p. 600.

David was judged to have done "that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and turned from nothing that he commanded him, all the dayes of his life, saue onely in the matter of Vriah, the Hittite".[415] Never is the morality of the deeds David performed during his warring campaigns questioned. Joshua and his armies ruthlessly destroy Jericho; yet, "those who charge Israel with barbaric cruelty in exterminating the inhabitants of Jericho fail to comprehend that Israel was God's instrument of divine judgement".[416] This explanation, offered by a modern exegete, was probably known or sensed by the Elizabethans. From these considerations, one inevitably concludes that the line of action pursued by the Biblical scourges, who were of the elect, was fully sanctioned and approved according to a system of ethics particularly applicable to these situations. However, there is one characteristic which distinguishes God's elect like Moses, Joshua, or David from the wicked scourges. The elect were always fully aware of their divinely-assigned mission and completely in accord with and totally committed to God's wishes and commands in all respects including that of their function as scourges. Their mission as scourges was fully integrated within their spiritual concepts and identity as members of the chosen people. There was no dichotomy between what they were and what they did.

The situation was different for the wicked or the reprobate who carried out the mission of scourging. The significance of their existence differentiates itself on two levels, that of their personal pursuits and that of the scourging purpose for which their personal pursuits are being used. The Biblical texts and annotators offer explanations and comments in order that the existence and the action of the wicked scourge may be validated. The following considerations apply to scourges like the wicked Cyrus,[417] like Sennacherib, like Nabuchadnezzar,

---

415. G.V., 1 Kgs. 15:5. David says: "I haue pursued mine enemies, and taken them and haue not turned againe til I had consumed them": G.V., Ps. 18:37. The annotator adds the following: "Dauid declareth that he did nothing besides his vocation, but was stirred vp by Gods Spirit to execute his iudgements": G.V., Ps., 18:37, n. (d).

416. Scofield, ed. cit., n. 2, p.260, n. 1.

417. See G.V., Ps. 144:10, n. (i).

God's servant,[418] and his armies, the servants of God,[419] like Darius and others, all of whom viewed themselves as nothing less than gods in the course of their career. In spite of the evil side of their nature, they were destroyers chosen, prepared, and stirred to action by God himself.[420] As in the case of Israel, the annotator makes plain that God's choices of the elect or the reprobate were not motivated by a pre-existing righteousness in the chosen candidate but rather by the presence of evils which must be eradicated. The God of Israel tells his people: "It is not for thy righteousnesse sake, or for thy ryght hart, that thou goest to possesse theyr lande: But for the wickednesse of these nations ...".[421] The plain fact is that they are made the executors of God's will,[422] the rods of his vengeance,[423] regardless of the moral integrity which might be theirs as individuals. All choices made in this matter are cases of God's free election.[424] Therefore, to be chosen as a scourge does not mean in any way to be righteous as a man. The Biblical annotators are very conscious of the double scale of values which must govern and explain the action of a scourge. His personal pursuits may be wicked but the purpose and use of God makes of these

---

418. See B.V., G.V., Jer. 25:9; 27:6.

419. See G.V., Jer. 50:14, n. (p).

420. God says, "I wyl prepare a destroyer with his weapons for thee ...": B.V., Jer. 22:7. "Suche ... he prepareth to execute his worke": G.V., Jer. 22:7, n. (d). "The Lord shal rayse vp the spirite of the king of the Medes, whiche hath alredy a desyre to destroy Babylon": B.V., Jer. 51:11. The Lord "calleth to the Medes and Persians and all those that shulde execute God's vengeance": G.V., Isa. 14:21, n. (n). See B.V., G.V., Isa. 48:14, and G.V., Isa. 48:14, n. (r). See also B.V., G.V., Isa. 10:26; G.V., Jer. 50:21, n. (t); B.V., G.V., Isa. 40:3 and G.V., Isa. 40:3, n. (f); B.V., 3 Esdras 2:2. The Babylonians "come as a destroyer from the Almightie": G.V., Isa. 13:6 and n. (f).

421. B.V., G.V., Deut. 9:5.

422. G.V., Deut 20:15, n. (f); etc.

423. B.V., Judges 3:12, n. (e); etc.

424. See G.V., 2 Sam. 7:24, n. (m).

pursuits is right.[425] The destiny the scourge works out for himself is evil but its instrumental value is commendable. In relation to the behaviour of Joseph's brothers, the annotator explains: "Though God vse the wicked, and turne their dooynges to his purpose: yet they are not excusable for their mischeuous intent".[426] In other words, "Albeit God detest sinne, yet he turneth mans wickednes to serue to his glorie"[427] and purpose. The career of a scourge is, therefore, subject to a double examination, that of his deeds as man and that of his deeds used to scourge. How can the morality of the man be reconciled with the moral use and purpose of his actions?

The Biblical texts on the subject do not make the position clear but they do offer some light. For there are passages which speak of a kind of coercion being used on the agent of God who needs a destroyer to fulfil his purpose. God chooses Cyrus "who shal do all thing in my Name, and by my direction".[428] Speaking of the destroyer created by God to destroy,[429] the annotator points out that "man can do nothing but so farre as God giueth power: for seing that all are his creatures, he must nedes gouerne and guide them".[430] The same applies to

---

425. "Thogh the Lord called the Babylonians his seruants, and their worke his worke in punishing his people, yet because they did it not to glorifie God, but for their owne malice, and to profite them selues, it is here called sinne": G.V., Jer. 50:14, n. (p). Jehu's action is described as follows: "For albeit God stirred him vp to execute his iudgements, yet he did them for his owne ambition, and not for the glorie of God, as the end declared: for he buylt vp that idolatrie which he had destroyed": G.V., Hos. 1:4. n. (f).

426. B.V., Gen. 45:8, n. (e).

427. G.V., Cen. 45:8, n. (c).

428. G.V., Isa. 41:25, n. (u).

429. See G.V., Isa. 54:16.

430. G.V., Isa. 54:16, n. (p). "All Kings hearts and waies are in his hands, he can turne them and dispose them as it pleaseth him, and therefore they nede not to feare man, but onely obey God": G.V., Jer. 42:11, n. (e). "No creature is able to do anie thing, but as God appointeth him, and that they are all but his instruments to do his worke, thogh the intentions be diuerse": G.V., Isa. 10:15, n. (k).

tyrants: "Tyrantes haue no power of them selues, neyther can doo any more harme then God appoynteth, and when he wyl they must cease".[431] "The enemies of Gods people haue no power ouer them, but by Gods appointement".[432] It would seem that the scourge is not fully responsible for his actions performed within that function, that God is the instigator and even that the scourge has no other option to follow. Elsewhere, the annotator allows room for personal motives, these being subservient to God's purposes. Good success is promised to "Cyrus and Darius, whome ambition moued to fight against Babylon: but God vsed them as his rods to punish his enemies".[433] Other tyrants and their armies "whom God had appoynted to be a rodde to scourge"[434] seem compelled to act under threat of punishment. "Cursed be he that dooth the woorke of the Lorde fraudulently, and cursed be he that keepeth backe his swoorde from sheadding of blood".[435] The annotator explains "that God wolde punish the Caldeans, if they did not destroy the Egyptians and that with a courage, and calleth this executing of his vengeance against his enemies his worke: thogh the Caldeans sought another end".[436] It is clear from these texts, which reflect the patterns of thought of Marlowe's contemporaries in these matters, that the duty of scourging supersedes all other motives and that the refusal to act carries all the onus of evil regardless of what the motives of the scourge might have been.

However, other Biblical notes do not exonerate the scourge so easily,

---

431. B.V., Ezek. 30:25, n. (h).

432. G.V., Judges, 3:12, n. (g).

433. G.V., Ps. 137:9, n. (h).

434. B.V., Ezek. 7:10,n. (c).

435. B.V., Jer. 48:10. The Geneva Bible uses the word "negligently" instead of "fraudulently": see G.V., Jer. 48:10. Could Marlowe have included his scene of the slaying of Calyphas to illustrate the effects of this curse?

436. G.V., Jer. 48:10, n. (h).

even though God might be imposing his will throughout. "Gods wil imposeth suche a necessitie to the second causes, that nothing can be done but according to the same, and yet mans wil worketh as of it selfe, so that it can not be excused in doing euil, by alledging that it is Gods ordinance".[437] The enigma of free will versus God's will is fully introduced in the above passage and confirmed in the following one. "Thogh God vsed these wicked tyrants to execute his iuste iudgements, yet they are not to be excused, because thei proceded of ambicion and malice".[438] Later, Nabuchadnezzar's behaviour towards the Jews is assessed in this light. God gave all, the fate of the young men and maidens, the old men who stooped with age, into the hands of the king of the Chaldeans.[439] Yet this was "not because God approueth him which yet is the minister of his iustice, but because God wolde by his iuste iudgement punish this people: for this King was led with ambicion and vaine glorie, whereunto were ioyned furie and crueltie: therefore his worke was condemnable, notwithstanding it was iuste and holy on Gods parte, who vsed this wicked instrument to declare his iustice".[440] It would seem that the action of the scourge is driven by the scourge's private motives and that God uses the effect of these actions for his own purposes. Occasionally, Satan is brought into the picture to categorize more markedly the double moral value of events brought about by the motives of the scourge and used by God for his own purposes. With respect to the Assyrians' manner of dealing with the Jews, the Biblical annotator has this to say:"Gods intention is to chastice them for their amendement, and the Assyrians purpose is to destroie them to enriche them selues: thus in respect of Gods justice, it is Gods worke, but in respect of their owne malice, it is the worke of the deuil".[441] Finally, the wicked scourge

---

437. G.V., 2 Chr. 10:15, n. (e). This comment is used to explain Jeroboam's conduct.

438. G.V., 2 Kgs. 24:3, n. (b). For similar views, see also G.V., 1 Chr. 5:26, n. (l).

439. See B.V., G.V., 2 Chr. 36:17.

440. G.V., 2 Chr. 36:17, n. (i).

441. G.V., Isa. 10:6, n. (f).

is likened to Satan himself. Again in connection with the deeds of Nabuchadnezzar, "the servant of God", the annotator has this to say: "The wicked and Satan him selfe are Gods seruants, because he maketh them to serue him by constreint and turneth that which thei do of malice, to his honour and glorie".[442] It would seem from these texts that the scourge is compelled to act by forces external to himself but that he is fully responsible for the character which he gives to his actions.

The problem thus arises as to the degree of freedom the scourge might enjoy in the exercise of his role and, consequently, the extent to which he is to bear the moral responsibility of his actions. Another question also comes to the fore as to who are really God's servants, the elect like Moses or the wicked like Nabuchadnezzar, the scourge who unwittingly executes God's will or the one who strives with more or less success, as was the case for Israel, to abide by God's law. The annotator again offers some answer: "Thogh wicked Kings be called Gods seruants, as Cyrus, ... forasmuche as he vseth them to execute his iudgements: yet Dauid because of Gods promes, and they, that rule godly, are properly so called, because they serue not their owne affections, but set forthe Gods glorie".[443] The conclusion is obvious: a scourge of God is among the elect when a genuine commitment to God determines the motives of the scourge, both as an individual and in the pursuit of his scourging career; a scourge of God is among the reprobate when no common denominator exists between his personal motives and the purpose his action fulfils in the providential plan. The moral image of the reprobate scourge is double, evil as far as he is concerned and good as far as his mission contributes to the divine plan. There is one trait which distinguishes the one from the other. The Biblical scourge among the elect is fully conscious of both aspects of his presence and role; he knows

---

442. G.V., Jer. 25:9, n. (f).

443. G.V., Ps. 144:10, n. (i).

he is a scourge performing God's will in this respect. On the contrary, the reprobate scourge pursues his own ambitions and unknowingly, thereby, fulfils God's plan. Cyrus, Darius, and their like are recognized as scourges of God by others and not by themselves, at least not fully. What is the position of Tamburlaine with regards to these considerations? Is he among the elect or the reprobate?

By now, with all that has been said to clarify the moral position of the Biblical scourge, there is no need to assess Tamburlaine's moral responsibility in his role as Scourge of God. By Biblical standards, Tamburlaine's deeds as a scourge carry no moral guilt. Everything he does, from the brutal murder of innocents to the blasphemous inferences possibly present in the play, can aptly find its place within his mission as a scourge. It must be stated that, throughout the play, his most shocking acts of cruelty are safely covered under the umbrella of his divinely-assigned mission. As a scourge, he defeats and humiliates the Turkish Bajazet and Zabina; as a scourge he slays his son; under the same pretences he inflicts cruelty upon his harnessed Turkish kings. All of these deeds he performs as a Scourge enjoined to execute the wrath of God. Furthermore, like the Biblical scourges of the category of the elect, Tamburlaine knows that he is fulfilling the mission of a scourge. He proclaims himself in this vocation and reminds his entourage periodically of his prerogatives as such. Tamburlaine is conscious of his function as a scourge and places his performances within this perspective when the need arises. This trait of Tamburlaine is perhaps the main source of the difficulty in assessing the hero as a man and accounts for the ambiguity and ambivalence which critics repeatedly have noted in him and find so difficult to explain. The awareness that Tamburlaine is fulfilling a special mission seems to exonerate both the man and his deeds and yet Tamburlaine seems to lack the necessary prerogatives which would rank him among the elect like Moses. What was Marlowe's real intention when he fashioned his hero? Did he wish to make him a righteous scourge of God or a wicked agent of God?

There are traits in Tamburlaine which evoke the image of the great heroes of Israel like Moses, Joshua, and David. These inevitably direct the attention of the reader to Christ of whom they were prefigured types.[444] One may remember that Christ is often termed a captain of armies,[445] supposedly the warrior of God par excellence. Critics have detected traits in Tamburlaine which point to the figure of Christ. Because of the difficulty of reconciling the mission of Tamburlaine with that of the Saviour, they have resorted to a convenient compromise of qualifying Tamburlaine as a counterpart of Christ, a kind of earthly Messiah[446] or even an antichrist. This theme would merit a development of its own. Other traits in Tamburlaine recall the Biblical tyrants like Sennacherib, Nabuchadnezzar, and Cyrus, all of whom were servants of God and yet whose evil moral cast leaves no doubt whatsoever. The presence of these tyrants inevitably led the attention of the reader to the beast of Babylon, to the Antichrist of the Book of Revelation, to the embodiment of another Lucifer, all aspects which would also merit attention. Tamburlaine obviously has something of both the elect and the reprobate among the Biblical scourges. Without going through all the details which an analysis of this double image of Tamburlaine would entail, one would hope to find clues in the play which would categorize the moral Tamburlaine more clearly than has been done in the past. For one can hardly expect or accept the assumption that the dramatist would have allowed

---

444. These were all part of the succession of prophets which would culminate with the advent of Christ: see G.V., Deut. 18:15, n. (g). For Joshua, meaning "Jehovah-Saviour", as a type of Christ, see Scofield, op. cit., n. 2, p. 259, n. 2. For David as a figure of Christ, see G.V., 2 Sam. 22:5, n. (c); G.V., 1 Kgs. 1:23 and n. (l); B.V., Ezek. 34:23, n. (i).

445. Christ is often described in military terms. He is God's "lieutenant and governour" over the Church: G.V., Matt. 22:44, n. (q). He is the "captaine and finisher of our fayth", the equivalent to the alpha and omega of the same: see B.V., Heb. 12:2; etc.

446. An earthly Messiah is supposedly in quest of a wordly kingdom as Tamburlaine was: see B.V., Mal. 3:1, n. (a).

his audiences to leave the theatre bringing with them so ambiguous and unresolved an impression of his hero. The modern critic who accepts Tamburlaine's ambiguity as the final word had possibly overlooked pointers in the play which definitely direct Tamburlaine more towards one category than the other. Such pointers may emerge when the play is once more set against the teaching about the scourges as found in the Bible.

There is no doubt that Tamburlaine is favoured by the heavenly powers. Contrary to the historical records about Timur,[447] Marlowe portrays his hero as the invincible warrior, as Moses and Joshua had been.[448] His colleagues make it plain that Tamburlaine was blessed with health, majesty, and power (2T. 5.3.24-25) in much the same way that Nabuchadnezzar[449] and Cyrus[450] had been favoured. In this, the heavenly powers of God had been acting in accordance with what had been promised: "Be constant in your vocation, and God wil confirme you with heauenlie strength".[451] However, there are several traits about Tamburlaine which could conjure up responses of disapproval from one familiar with the Biblical teaching on the subject. Tamburlaine's cruelty could be comfortably set within the action of a scourge of God. However, if carried too far, as his manner of dealing with Calyphas suggested, Tamburlaine's cruelty could become that of the wicked who because they "liue euer in feare and also are ambitious, they become cruel, and spare not to murther them, whome by nature they ought moste to cherish and defende";[452] Tamburlaine's fear, in this incident, being that of failing to meet

---

447. See above, pp. 57 ff.; p. 73 and n. 177; p. 80.

448. See B.V., G.V., Josh. 1:5. "I wil arme thee with an inuincible strength and constancie, so that all the powers of the worlde shal not ouercome thee": G.V., Jer. 15:20, n. (y). This was the promise made to the prophet Jeremiah by God himself. Did such prerogatives extend to prophets like Tamburlaine?

449. "The God of heauen hathe giuen thee a kingdome, power, and strength, and glorie": G.V., Dan, 2:37.

450. "I haue giuen thee strength, power and autoritie": G.V., Isa. 45:5, n. (ε).

451. G.V., Ps. 31:24, n. (r).

452. G.V., 2 Chr. 21:4, n. (b). This is a comment on Jehoram's slaying of his brothers.

with the requirements of a scourge. Furthermore, to have recourse exclusively to arms could show a lack of wisdom on the part of Tamburlaine for "wysdome is better than harnesse"[453] or "weapons of warre".[454] Thus, the stage hero, by Biblical standards most favourable to scourges, was not necessarily clear of all blame.

There are other traits about Tamburlaine which, when they are set against certain Biblical texts, obviously place the hero among the reprobate. Tamburlaine was one of these tyrants who, like Nabuchadnezzar, were described as beastly lions ravaging upon the enemies.[455] But above all, Tamburlaine carried his self-condemnation in his love of the world,[456] a trait which made him "an aduersarie to God".[457] The spectators could not forget the momentous occasion when Tamburlaine had opted for "the perfect bliss and sole felicity,/ The sweet fruition of an earthly crown" (1T. 2.7.28-29), a standard of value which flatly contradicted that proposed by the annotator to the Book of Ecclesiasticus. He expressly said that true felicity was not to be put in any wordly thing.[458] Along with this truism inspired by wisdom, there were texts which exposed the utter futility of winning the whole world at the cost of everything else.[459]

---

453. B.V., Eccles. 9:17.

454. G.V., Eccles. 9:18.

455. See Jer. 49:19; 50:17. "Satan and his kingdome" are compared to Leviathan: see G.V., Isa. 27:1, n. (b). So are "the mightie tyrantes of the worlde, enimies to Christ": B.V., Isa. 27:1, n. (a). "The Scriptures compare tyrantes to cruel and huge beastes which devour al that be weaker then they": B.V., Ezek. 32:2, n. (b). These beasts may be lions, dragons: see B.V. and G.V., Ezek. 32:2. The Pharaoh is compared to Leviathan (see B.V., G.V., Ps. 74:14), to "a great monstre of the sea, or whale": G.V., Ps. 74:14, n. (k). The comparison of tyrants or warriors to lions is frequent in Scripture.

456. "If any man loue the worlde, the loue of the Father is not in hym": B.V., 1 John 2:15.

457. G.V., 1 John 2:15, n. (i).

458. See B.V., Eccles. 3:1, n. (a).

459. See B.V., Matt. 16:26; Mark 8:36; Luke 9:25.

Tamburlaine obviously did not adhere to this teaching. His dedication to the cause of the empery of the world was almost messianic in quality, akin to that of an earthly Messiah whose breadth of vision as well as of wisdom did not go beyond the aspirations to "a wordly kingdome".[460] Ambitions of this nature were not far removed from those of Satan himself, the usurper of the empire of the earth.[461] In this respect there was much of Satan in Tamburlaine as his methods of seducing Theridamas to the glamour of worldly values show early in the play. Tamburlaine the seducer appears as the modern form of the Satan who had enticed Christ also with the glory of earthly kingdoms.[462] Thus, Tamburlaine's ambitions, exclusively worldly, coupled with his "dreaming prophesies" proclaiming his special function as a Scourge of God, could be readily detected as sheer illusions of Satan. Like Simon, the Magician, who had been bewitched into false claims to power, Tamburlaine, while posing as "the Scourge and Wrath of God", was a fallen victim to "the craft of Satan" whose purpose was "to couer all his illusions vnder the Name of God"[463] or to cover a dedicated pursuit of his own selfish ambitions under the religious guise of a divine vocation. All of these factors, in addition to the nature of the interests pursued by Tamburlaine and his captains, made him and his men worthy of the condemnation addressed to Judah by the prophet Isaiah: "Thy princes are wicked and companions of theeves: they loue gyftes altogeather, and gape for rewardes";[464] a good description of Tamburlaine and his warriors.

But one certain fact about tyrants like Tamburlaine was that they were in power only for a time. Numerous are the texts consoling the afflicted with the hope contained in this thought. "Thogh God bestowe his benefites for a time

460. B.V., Mal. 3:1, n. (a).

461. See B.V., Luke 4:6, n. (b).

462. See Luke 4:5, 6.

463. G.V., Acts 8:10, n. (e) and G.V., Isa. 36:10 and n. (i).

464. B.V., Isa. 1:23. See also G.V., Isa. 1:23.

vpon his enemies, yet he hathe his seasons, when he wil take them away, to the intent thei might se his vengeance, which is prepared against them".[465] God directed his vengeance especially against such tyrants who felt excessively sure of themselves, sure of meeting no harm.[466] Tamburlaine, who boasted he had fought his wars unscathed and would "rage as though there were no God"[467] or no other power able to curb his action, becomes acutely vulnerable to the strokes of God whose main prupose was to make such tyrants fully aware that they were but men.[468] According to several Biblical texts, God's manner was to strike such arrogance with a sudden and unexpected illness[469] in the middle of their purposes[470] for, as David said, "the bloodthirstie and deceiptful menne shal not liue out halfe their dayes".[471] "Though the phisition shewe his helpe";[472] the divine verdict was "to day a King, to morow... dead".[473] God could have inter-

---

465. G.V., 2 Kgs. 3:19, n. (n). See also G.V., Ps. 68:1, n. (a); B.V., Dan. 11:36, n. (uu).

466. "He hath sayde in his hart, tushe, I can not be remoued: for I can not be touched at any time with harme": B.V., Ps., T.H., 10:6. See also B.V., C.P.T., and G.V., Ps. 10:6.

467. B.V., Ezek. 35:11, n. (f).

468. See B.V., G.V., Ezek. 28:9. The Psalmist says, "Put them in feare, O God: that the Heathen may knowe them selues to be but menne": B.V., Ps. 9:20. This fact, "thei can not learne without the feare of thy Iudgement": G.V., Ps. 9:20, n. (k). The tyrant "can not striue with him that is stronger than he": G.V., Eccles. 6:10. "God ... wil make him to fele that he is mortal": G.V., Eccles. 6:10, n. (h), and B.V., Eccles. 6:10, n. (e).

469. Antiochus became so proud "beyond the condition of man", thinking he had command over nature, that he was brought down, carried upon a horse-litter and forced to acknowledge the manifest power of God upon him: see B.V., G.V., 2 Macc. 9:8. Was this the source of inspiration for a Tamburlaine boasting of his power to control various aspects of nature?

470. "The wicked shal say, Peace and reste, seming yet to be but in the midway of their purposes, then shal destruction sodenly come": G.V., Ps. 2:12, n. (i).

471. B.V., Ps. 55:24 (G.V., Ps. 55:23). See also B.V., G.V., Job 22:16.

472. B.V., Ecclus. 10:11.

473. B.V., G.V., Ecclus. 10:11.

vened to save the life of Tamburlaine, but he clearly does not in spite of the pleas made to heaven by his colleagues. Perhaps Tamburlaine's sudden illness was the answer to his challenge "if any God" after the burning of the Koran. Death and destruction came suddenly[474] without hopes of recovery.[475] All, princes included,[476] would be forced, as David admits, to realize that "the way of al men is to dye".[477] Tamburlaine must regretfully resign himself to this fate: "The Scourge of God must die" (2T. 5.3.228). The wicked scourge simply was made to disappear from the scene as soon as he had fulfilled God's plans to prevent him from doing anymore harm.[478] It was understood all along that he was there only for a time.

Besides an inherent worldliness disguised under godly motives, besides being suddenly removed from his pursuits, besides, let it be remembered, his movement towards self-deification, all of which traits point to the evil nature of Tamburlaine, the wicked tyrant is stricken by his own agent of destruction and crushed with the sense of futility inherent to his situation. The physician makes plain the fact that Tamburlaine is worn away by the effects of his wrath. This squares with the teaching on this matter as found in the Book of Proverbs: "The wickednesse of the vngodly shal catch him self, and with the snares of his owne sinne shalbe trapped".[479] This was a part of God's retributive justice

---

474. See G.V., Ps. 62:3. "For they shal soone be cut downe like the grasse": B.V., Ps. 37:2. "For Gods iudgement cutteth downe their state in a moment": G.V., Ps. 37:2, n. (b). "He wyl with pyning sicknesse make an end of me, yea he wyl make an ende of me in one day": B.V., Isa. 38:12. See also B.V., G.V., Job 18:15; G.V., Job 18:5, n. (e); B.V., G.V., Job 20:8; 21:13; B.V., Job 21:13, n. (d); B.V., G.V., Job 34:20; B.V., Job 34:20, n. (f).

475. See B.V., G.V., Prov. 6:15.

476. "But ye shal dye as a man, and ye, princes, shal fall like others": G.V., Ps. 82:7. See also B.V., Ps. 82:7. "No title of honour shal excuse you": G.V., Ps. 82:7, n. (e). Tamburlaine's title "Scourge of God" does not shield him from death.

477. B.V., Ps., T.H., 139:24, n. (f).

478. See G.V., Job. 22:16, n. (l).

479. B.V., Prov. 5:22. See also G.V., Prov. 5:22.

vened to save the life of Tamburlaine, but he clearly does not in spite of the pleas made to heaven by his colleagues. Perhaps Tamburlaine's sudden illness was the answer to his challenge "if any God" after the burning of the Koran. Death and destruction came suddenly[474] without hopes of recovery.[475] All, princes included,[476] would be forced, as David admits, to realize that "the way of al men is to dye".[477] Tamburlaine must regretfully resign himself to this fate: "The Scourge of God must die" (2T. 5.3.228). The wicked scourge simply was made to disappear from the scene as soon as he had fulfilled God's plans to prevent him from doing anymore harm.[478] It was understood all along that he was there only for a time.

Besides an inherent worldliness disguised under godly motives, besides being suddenly removed from his pursuits, besides, let it be remembered, his movement towards self-deification, all of which traits point to the evil nature of Tamburlaine, the wicked tyrant is stricken by his own agent of destruction and crushed with the sense of futility inherent to his situation. The physician makes plain the fact that Tamburlaine is worn away by the effects of his wrath. This squares with the teaching on this matter as found in the Book of Proverbs: "The wickednesse of the vngodly shal catch him self, and with the snares of his owne sinne shalbe trapped".[479] This was a part of God's retributive justice

---

474. See G.V., Ps. 62:3. "For they shal soone be cut downe like the grasse": B.V., Ps. 37:2. "For Gods iudgement cutteth downe their state in a moment": G.V., Ps. 37:2, n. (b). "He wyl with pyning sicknesse make an end of me, yea he wyl make an ende of me in one day": B.V., Isa. 38:12. See also B.V., G.V., Job 18:15; G.V., Job 18:5, n. (e); B.V., G.V., Job 20:8; 21:13; B.V., Job 21:13, n. (d); B.V., G.V., Job 34:20; B.V., Job 34:20, n. (f).

475. See B.V., G.V., Prov. 6:15.

476. "But ye shal dye as a man, and ye, princes, shal fall like others": G.V., Ps. 82:7. See also B.V., Ps. 82:7. "No title of honour shal excuse you": G.V., Ps. 82:7, n. (e). Tamburlaine's title "Scourge of God" does not shield him from death.

477. B.V., Ps., T.H., 139:24, n. (f).

478. See G.V., Job. 22:16, n. (l).

479. B.V., Prov. 5:22. See also G.V., Prov. 5:22.

requiring that the scourge must be scourged, a notion present in Marlowe's play. The Book of Job has many lines about this phase of the career of an evil tyrant or scourge. His material ambitions are struck with sterility. "Thogh he buylde, ... to get him fame, yet God shal bring all to naught".[480] "Neyther shal the prosperitie there of be prolonged vpon earth".[481] "His sumptuous buyldings shulde neuer come to perfection".[482] This trait is strikingly applicable to Tamburlaine who disappears before he has built the citadel and the palace he had planned and whose posterity holds little promise of prolonging his fame and greatness. So had David died before carrying out his cherished plans of building a temple in Jerusalem; so had Moses and Joshua died before bringing their missions to perfection, one may object. However, there was this great difference that, in the cases of these Biblical heroes, the successor of each had resumed the mission where it had been left off and had developed it to proportions far greater than what had been previously planned. For Tamburlaine, the situation is quite different. Eliphaz in the Book of Job warned: "He shal perish afore his tyme be worne out, and his branche shal be greene"[483] meaning that "his progenie of ofspryng shal not continue".[484] The hand of God would be upon the wicked[485] as it was upon Tamburlaine crying out against "him whose hand afflicts /his/ soul" (2T. 5.3.47). Tamburlaine is scourged as Babylon the great scourger was in its turn scourged.[486] One may assume that the dramatist meant Tamburlaine's death in that city to be symbolic in this respect. Babylon was

---

480. G.V., Job 15:28, n. (r).

481. B.V., Job 15:29.

482. G.V., Job 15:29, n. (s).

483. B.V., Job 15:32.

484. B.V., Job 15:32, n. (p).

485. "The hand of God is vpon me": see G.V., Job. 27:5, n. (c).

486. See B.V., G.V., Isa. 33:1 and G.V., Isa. 33:1, n. (b); B.V., G.V., Jer. 50:2; G.V., Jer. 50:2, n. (a); B.V., G.V., Ezek. 7:11.

the seat of idolatry and the centre of evil in all its forms. Tamburlaine, while scourging his world, had degraded himself into an idolatrous form of self-deification. Consequently, Marlowe could not direct his hero to heaven; there were too many objectionable aspects in his nature. Neither could he direct him to hell; he had been too ostensibly led and favoured by heaven. A most expedient way of terminating his career was to direct his hero to Babylon and have him die within the confines and ruins of this symbolic earthly abode of evil. Tamburlaine's death in Babylon was doubly meaningful. Tamburlaine's ambitious pursuits came to an end amid the ruins of stately Babylon, a symbol of secular power and gain. The worldly Tamburlaine and the worldly Babylon were at one in the dust and ruins of their former magnificence and splendour. As opposed to the celestial Jerusalem, the seat of iniquity was a proper burial place for the morally evil Tamburlaine. The Elizabethans, preoccupied and interested in building up a spiritual Jerusalem, would not have missed the significance of Tamburlaine ending his days in that city. By that very fact, the prospect for a continuation of Tamburlaine's career by his own sons would have been slight. The play, as well as history, proved them to be. The tearful Amyras, even though he is set in state, fully crowned in his father's chariot, Tamburlaine's only throne, offers little hope of future greatness for the empire of Tamburlaine. Like Nabuchadnezzar and the other tyrants of the Bible, Tamburlaine suddenly disappears from the scene in the midst of unfinished military campaigns, unrealized projects, and dim prospects for the glory of his empire.

Marlovian scholars have judged that Marlowe did not balance the plot of the play, especially the second part of it. The dramatist, according to them, seems to have unduly precipitated the end of Tamburlaine's career. As a result, the death of Tamburlaine is more an anticlimax than a glorious end for a great hero. Furthermore, because the dramatist ends his play so abruptly, there is no room for a proper and adequate treatment of the death scene of the hero. It

is true that Marlowe seems to be unable to dramatize moments of a final agony realistically. But one wonders if the sudden precipitated end of Tamburlaine was not fully intended by the dramatist. The sudden illness and death of Tamburlaine was probably the most expedient way of casting a judgment on the morality of Tamburlaine the man. Marlowe's audiences probably left the theatre with a clear understanding of who Tamburlaine,"the Scourge and Wrath of God" was and what he had been meant to portray. Their familiarity with the role of Biblical prophets, the characteristics of the wrath of God, and the purpose of God's scourges probably provided all the necessary material for the audience to understand all the aspects of Marlowe's hero. By viewing Tamburlaine against the gigantic panorama of the careers unfolded by Biblical scourges, Marlowe's audiences grasped the full dimension of the hero, and easily placed him among the great who had stalked the earth as the ministers of the Biblical God. In this perspective, the apparent dualism and ambiguity of Tamburlaine resolved themselves to some extent into a coherent whole meaningful to the Elizabethan spectator. The Elizabethan understood the exact place Tamburlaine was to hold both as a man and as a Scourge of God. Perhaps Tamburlaine, in this way, did fully meet with the expectations and with the tastes of the Elizabethan audience.

is true that Marlowe seems to be unable to dramatize moments of a final agony realistically. But one wonders if the sudden precipitated end of Tamburlaine was not fully intended by the dramatist. The sudden illness and death of Tamburlaine was probably the most expedient way of casting a judgment on the morality of Tamburlaine the man. Marlowe's audiences probably left the theatre with a clear understanding of who Tamburlaine,"the Scourge and Wrath of God" was and what he had been meant to portray. Their familiarity with the role of Biblical prophets, the characteristics of the wrath of God, and the purpose of God's scourges probably provided all the necessary material for the audience to understand all the aspects of Marlowe's hero. By viewing Tamburlaine against the gigantic panorama of the careers unfolded by Biblical scourges, Marlowe's audiences grasped the full dimension of the hero, and easily placed him among the great who had stalked the earth as the ministers of the Biblical God. In this perspective, the apparent dualism and ambiguity of Tamburlaine resolved themselves to some extent into a coherent whole meaningful to the Elizabethan spectator. The Elizabethan understood the exact place Tamburlaine was to hold both as a man and as a Scourge of God. Perhaps Tamburlaine, in this way, did fully meet with the expectations and with the tastes of the Elizabethan audience.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to analyse some religious elements in Tamburlaine and, in the light of these elements, to define the hero, to explain his relationship with the other stage characters and, finally to show how these religious elements act as principles of coherence for the play as a whole. While this study is not exhaustive by any means, nevertheless, several conclusions already emerge from the use of this approach.

A comparison of the historical background of Timur's career with the Tamerlane-myth has shown that chroniclers had already transformed several aspects of Timur into legendary material largely fashioned according to Christian thought patterns. The influence of religious elements had already moulded the Tamerlane-myth in many ways by the time it reached Marlowe. Additional elements borrowed from contemporary religious issues and from the Bible, seemed to have played an important part in Marlowe's dramatic portrayal of this career. A study of the Moslem elements in Tamburlaine has brought out traits which differentiate the moral image of the Moslem Tamburlaine from that of the Moslem Turks. Marlowe seems to have taken into account the Moslem background of Tamburlaine, not by associating him directly with Moslem practices as he does for the Turks, but by depicting his hero in the traits of the popular image of Mahomet, an image familiar to the Elizabethans. To associate Tamburlaine with the image of Mahomet in this way was probably in keeping with what Elizabethans might expect of a great Moslem hero in the same way that the cherished hope of any zealous Moslem was possibly that he might reproduce in his own life the living image of the founder of his faith. Like Mahomet, Tamburlaine is driven by pride and ambition and aspires to nothing less than world-rule. Both are extraordinarily gifted men endowed with unusual powers of persuasion and a remarkable sense of leadership. Both of these leaders pursue their ideals by waging war under the guise of religious motives. Nevertheless, in practice,

their values are exclusively earthly or worldly as Elizabethans would have expected them to be. The moral traits common to both are yet more striking. By Elizabethan, and by Biblical standards, both are false prophets pursuing their careers on the impetus and inspiration of supposedly illusory dreams or visions. While both claim to fight for the cause of monotheism, in reality, they use their exploits on the battlefield as means to glorify and make idols of themselves. In fact, this self-deification is the driving force of Tamburlaine's action as it supposedly was of Mahomet according to popular descriptions of him. Tamburlaine's sense of dedication, his singleness of purpose, and the zeal he displays in his pursuits reflect the characteristics proper to a religion of war possibly modelled on that of Mahomet according to Elizabethan descriptions. The ethics of that religion transposed into reality substantiate the prophetic dreams of both leaders. Thus, throughout the play, Marlowe respects the Moslem character and background of Tamburlaine in a manner which is not obviously detrimental to the hero. Marlowe uses other methods to emphasise the Moslem character of the Turks. He shows them up as idolatrous pagans by associating their Moslem customs with connotations of idolatry borrowed from the Bible. Thus the study of the Moslem religious elements brings out the objectionable traits of the Moslem Turks and justifies Tamburlaine's measures taken to exterminate them.

The challenge put to Mahomet by Tamburlaine is one of the highlights of the second part of the play and probably parallels the defeat of Bajazet in the first part. Again, this scene draws its full significance from the idolatrous connotations associated with the burning of the Koran, connotations which are also drawn from the Bible. These Biblical allusions help to define the role of Tamburlaine as opposed to that of the Turks and the founder of their faith. Obviously, these insights into these characters can be perceived only by an audience familiar with the Biblical text and the Moslem background of the stage characters. The fact that these elements are not sufficiently

taken into account in the interpretation of this play would seem to explain why it appears formless and incoherent to critics trying to unravel Marlowe's thought. Thus, the Tamburlaine-Turk antagonism is built on issues which were probably commonplace to Elizabethans, so commonplace that Marlowe could take them for granted. He did not have to allude to them directly. These issues and the Biblical inferences used to qualify them did not have to be explained to an audience who lived with the perpetual Moslem threat and who, at the same time, drew their spiritual resources from the Biblical text read or listened to regularly in church services. Thus, it would seem that the Biblical inferences in the play are the elements which give sense or meaning to Tamburlaine's relationship with the Turks and with Mahomet.

Paradoxical as this may seem, Biblical inferences, at the same time, help to qualify the pagan side of Tamburlaine the man and to understand the place this dimension may have in his mission as a scourge. In other words, familiarity with the Bible helps to resolve the inconsistencies, dualities, and trivialities of the hero which emerge from Tamburlaine's entity as opposed to his action. Self-deification and worldly pursuits become compatible with Tamburlaine's mission only when the ambivalent character of the hero is seen against a Biblical background. Marlowe develops the dramatic character of Tamburlaine as a tyrant and a scourge of God along Biblical lines describing the heroes and the oppressors of Israel. The heroic qualities of Tamburlaine are subserved to a divinely-assigned mission patterned according to Biblical models of scourges. Marlowe draws upon Biblical imagery related to the activities of scourges to describe Tamburlaine's action in the play. Only when the link is made between Tamburlaine's dramatic words and action and those of his Biblical counterparts does his role become coherent and meaningful. When seen against this Biblical background the shocking and gruesome traits of Tamburlaine become acceptable. These Biblical inferences would have been obvious to the Elizabethans familiar with the Scriptures.

Elizabethans would have detected similarities between Tamburlaine's career and those of David, Nabuchadnezzar, or Cyrus. These similarities would have made the anomalies and the repulsive aspects of Tamburlaine's deeds acceptable by the Biblical associations they evoked. The same may be said about the shocking disrespect which Tamburlaine as a scourge shows for the ideals cherished by the Elizabethans. These would have posed no problems to Marlowe's contemporaries. Like his Biblical counterparts, Tamburlaine could be evil, cruel, and deceitful as he was towards Cosroe. He could even make a god of himself as a substitute for the gods he was destroying, as a substitute for Mahomet in the play, and still be a great figure fulfilling a divine mission as a servant of God. No matter what his allegiances were or how they were expressed, Tamburlaine's mission as a scourge of God, like that of the Biblical tyrants, exonerated him in all that he did within the scope of his mission. Only when Marlowe's text is closely compared with that of the Bible editions of his time do the Biblical inferences which kept the presence of Biblical heroes hovering in the background of the dramatic scene become evident. These Biblical inferences associated Tamburlaine with the Biblical scourges and set him on another plane governed by rules of its own. These inferences are numerous enough to have made the play fully meaningful and coherent to an Elizabethan audience.

Thus, the pagan Tamburlaine dealing a crushing blow to the idolatrous Moslem Turks as he lived out his divinely-assigned mission could appeal to an Elizabethan audience in many ways. Portrayed in traits recalling the popular image of Mahomet, a device parallel to that of portraying Nabuchadnezzar and Cyrus as great kings of Chaldea and Persia respectively, Tamburlaine could personify the Biblical scourge revived according to the needs of modern times. The Elizabethan spectator would not have missed this point. In addition to this, Marlowe adroitly touched upon themes to which the Elizabethans were sensitive. Lofty aspirations and daring exploits appealed to the adventurous Elizabethans either directly involved in such pursuits or sharing those of

their contemporaries. Furthermore, the dictates of the Renaissance code of honour, which inspired Marlowe's hero, would reflect the kind of ethics of interest to the Elizabethans and would thus strike a note of sympathy with an Elizabethan audience. In addition to all these points, the beauty of Marlowe's verse and imagery could not help but exercise a charm of its own on contemporaries whose appreciative sensitivity to the spoken word is a well-known fact.

As was mentioned above, an appreciation of the meaningful coherence of Tamburlaine supposes a knowledge of the Moslem background of the play and more so of the Biblical text both of which were familiar to Marlowe and to his contemporaries. Because the play seems neither to have posed problems to the Elizabethans nor to have shocked them, one may assume that Marlowe and his audience shared a common basic understanding of the issues at play. These issues drew their significance from the Biblical connotations they evoked. Thus, Biblical allusions or inferences in Tamburlaine fulfil much more than a decorative or an ornamental role as some critics have supposed.[1] On the other hand, a distinction must be made between Marlowe's use of Biblical associations in Tamburlaine and that in his other plays. Critics have commented on Marlowe's ironic use of Biblical allusions in Doctor Faustus and The Jew of Malta. In many instances, Marlowe's insertion of a Biblical text in these plays reverses the roles and values apparently presented and radically opposes reality to appearance.[2] Biblical inferences in Tamburlaine are in general not so obvious as in the plays mentioned above,

---

1 - James H. Sims disagrees with Irving Ribner's assertion that Marlowe's Biblical allusions are "pure decoration, unrelated ... to the substance of the scene": quoted in Dramatic Uses of Biblical Allusions in Marlowe and Shakespeare (University of Florida Monographs, Humanities, No. 24, 1966), p. 16, n.

2 - See ibid., pp. 16 and 20.

but rather submerged in the text. Once detected, however, they appear to be used in a straightforward manner. In other words, their presence sometimes gives a certain slant to points being made, the idolatrous connotations given to Moslem practices being an example of this use. At other times, Biblical inferences define the character of Tamburlaine. But they are not the substance of dark sayings and radically ironic comments such as are found in the two plays mentioned above. They are rather explanatory and descriptive. The Biblical connotations in this play explain who Tamburlaine is and what he is doing.

The same may be said about the prophetic character of Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine's prophecies are not of the nature of dark sayings or mysterious conceits whose meanings must be unravelled by the ensuing action of the play. Dark sayings are only one aspect of several of the gift of prophecy. Tamburlaine's prophetic insights are limited to a vision of future events. Tamburlaine's actions "top his speech". What he had foreseen becomes reality no matter how impossible his plans first appear to be. Critics have aptly described him as "literal". Perhaps this is the reason why Judith Weil's analysis of Marlowe's plays as mysterious works of "Merlin's Prophet" does help to clarify Tamburlaine as one would hope and as she admits herself. Tamburlaine remains a riddle or a puzzle to the end.[3] The prophetic elements in this play are direct and Tamburlaine himself is not the scheming and ruthless character that Barabas proves himself to be in his play. Nor is he the type who reverses spiritual values as Faustus does. Nevertheless, the Biblical allusions in this play, however diffused or submerged they may be, appear as elements of coherence and clarification once they are detected and analysed. These Biblical elements possibly explain other problems about the play.

---

3 - See Judith Weil, Christopher Marlowe: Merlin's Prophet (Cambridge, 1977), p. 107.

One problem which has puzzled Marlovian scholars is that of Marlowe's orthodoxy. What do the Biblical elements in this play explain about this point? The problem depends upon what is meant by the word. If the word is taken in its broad sense, that is, as "belief in or agreement with what is, or is currently held to be right, especially in religious matters",[4] then a play like Tamburlaine, paradoxical as this may seem, is orthodox on several points. First, the image of the "only God" as it is depicted by the Moslem Turks and the Moslem Tamburlaine is orthodox by Christian standards.[5] It agrees in everyway with that of the Biblical God. In this respect, both Moslems and Christians are orthodox. The place and description of Christ in the play are also orthodox. Christ is treated with respect by Christians and Moslems alike.[6] It is true that Orcanes makes reservations about the power of Christ as compared to that of Mahomet. But in doing so Orcanes is expressing the views of an orthodox Moslem as are the Turks in the play. Marlowe's Turks behave according to what might be expected from orthodox Moslems in the time of Elizabeth. The attitudes of Frederick and Sigismund towards the heathen Turks are also orthodox by sixteenth-century standards. The attitudes displayed by these two Christian leaders were so admissible that they had become an accepted part of Christian teaching as some marginal notes of the Geneva Bible show. One did not have to keep one's word with the Turkish infidels. Finally, the theories on repentance expressed by the dying Sigismund are also orthodox.[7] They agree with the Christian traditional

---

4 - OED, art. "Orthodoxy".

5 - See 2T.2.2.45-53; 2.3.4 ff.; 5.1.182-184, 200-201.

6 - See 2T.1.1.133-135; 2.2.55-56.

7 - See 2T.2.3.2-9.

teaching of the redemptive value of repentance. But above all, Tamburlaine is and acts in conformity with the orthodox image of the Biblical scourges. Within the orthodox Biblical patterns set for scourges, Tamburlaine could do all that he does in the play, even make a god of himself. These pagan aspects did not deter from the fact that, meanwhile, Tamburlaine was fully accepted as a servant of God in his mission as a scourge. Consequently, several points in the play are orthodox. These various points are in keeping with the characters with whom they are connected because these characters are true to themselves while making these points. One can easily understand the number of difficulties critics will meet when they use the subjective approach to analyse this play. This approach would amount to saying that Marlowe is at the same time an orthodox Moslem or an orthodox repentant Christian or even an orthodox pagan as these appear in the Biblical text or in relation to the Biblical text. The conclusion is that the characters must be studied each on his own merit and the traits which Marlowe has drawn from his knowledge and experience to characterize them must be judged in relation to the character they portray. In many instances, the Biblical inferences attached to a particular character help to define his particular image and role.

An overall view of the play might help to place the various characters in their proper perspective. Harold F. Brooks has said that dramatic unity was as old in England as were the great cyclic dramas.[8] In these cycles, there was one dominant person, God. There was one action and one conflict in the drama. The action was that of the redeeming Providence of God in human affairs; the conflict was between good and evil. Episodes in the drama could be detached; God was the unifying element and gave meaning to the action of the play as a whole.[9] It has also been said that Tamburlaine is a series of

---

8 - Harold F. Brooks, "Marlowe and Early Shakespeare" in Brian Morris, ed., Christopher Marlowe, Mermaid Critical Commentaries, (London, 1968), p. 83.

9 - See ibid.

independent tableaux or episodes bearing little relation to each other and each conveying a message of its own.[10] In view of Brooks's belief that dramatic unity is a trait inherited from the medieval play and inherent to English drama, one wonders if Marlowe did not transpose the tableau-technique of the cycle plays into his own play. Could Marlowe have structured his play along the lines suggested by Brooks?

Presiding over all the action in Tamburlaine is the invisible wrathful God whose orthodox image complies with the Moslem and Christian concepts of this divinity. Immediately under or next to this God appears Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine has deified himself by proving his superiority over Mahomet and all the other gods. He has usurped the place of Mahomet next to God according to Moslem beliefs. That Tamburlaine is meant to supplant Christ as well is not explicitly stated in the play, but, in view of Orcanes's comments, the possibility might be intimated. It would be in keeping with Moslem theories about the place of Christ in the overall picture of the religious history of mankind. Tamburlaine is next to God, the only authority he openly accepts. He is perhaps meant to preside over the earthly scene as a reincarnation of the idealized Mahomet figure or of the imam as Persian Moslems would have understood their leader to be. This point is not openly expressed in the play but there is nothing to deny it. In such a position, Tamburlaine could be expected to rule and fill the heavens as he says he does. He could do as much for the earth as, again, he says he does. In the setting particular to this play Tamburlaine appears as the personified Wrath of God scourging and ruling the earth as the special agent of God. In the perspective of the play, all the other characters fade into insignificance in comparison to the importance given to Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine's colleagues are no more than marginal

---

10 - See Roy W. Battenhouse, Marlowe's 'Tamburlaine': A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy (Nashville, 1941), p. 150.

independent tableaux or episodes bearing little relation to each other and each conveying a message of its own.[10] In view of Brooks's belief that dramatic unity is a trait inherited from the medieval play and inherent to English drama, one wonders if Marlowe did not transpose the tableau-technique of the cycle plays into his own play. Could Marlowe have structured his play along the lines suggested by Brooks?

Presiding over all the action in Tamburlaine is the invisible wrathful God whose orthodox image complies with the Moslem and Christian concepts of this divinity. Immediately under or next to this God appears Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine has deified himself by proving his superiority over Mahomet and all the other gods. He has usurped the place of Mahomet next to God according to Moslem beliefs. That Tamburlaine is meant to supplant Christ as well is not explicitly stated in the play, but, in view of Orcanes's comments, the possibility might be intimated. It would be in keeping with Moslem theories about the place of Christ in the overall picture of the religious history of mankind. Tamburlaine is next to God, the only authority he openly accepts. He is perhaps meant to preside over the earthly scene as a reincarnation of the idealized Mahomet figure or of the imam as Persian Moslems would have understood their leader to be. This point is not openly expressed in the play but there is nothing to deny it. In such a position, Tamburlaine could be expected to rule and fill the heavens as he says he does. He could do as much for the earth as, again, he says he does. In the setting particular to this play Tamburlaine appears as the personified Wrath of God scourging and ruling the earth as the special agent of God. In the perspective of the play, all the other characters fade into insignificance in comparison to the importance given to Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine's colleagues are no more than marginal

---

10 - See Roy W. Battenhouse, Marlowe's 'Tamburlaine': A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy (Nashville, 1941), p. 150.

entities who exist in the measure that Tamburlaine sees or uses them for his own purposes or destroys them in his mission as a scourge. In this overall picture, the glory of the Tamburlaine-figure is sustained by and reflected in the array of mythological gods and goddesses, all of whom have been progressively relegated to positions inferior to his own. Thus the action in the play is presided over by the God of scourges acting through Tamburlaine, his scourge, who comes next to this God and who in turn presides over the galaxy of pagan gods in the heavens and rules over the good and evil, or idolatrous of the earth. Phenomena of nature, the handmaid of the Lord, pervades the atmosphere of the play, in many cases reflecting or enhancing the strife initiated by the presence of Tamburlaine as a warring scourge. This overall picture leads to a few comments.

This tableau shows up Tamburlaine as the central figure in relation to God, to the gods including Mahomet, to humans and to nature. Robert Greene indignantly condemned Tamburlaine as an "atheist". Was he justified in doing so? If the term "atheist" is understood in its precise meaning, that is, as one who denies the existence of "the only God", then nowhere in the play, does Tamburlaine display any atheistic inclinations. The presence of the highest God, the God of Scourges, is repeatedly alluded to. However, if the word is taken in its broad sense, as a disrespectful violation of Christian orthodox beliefs and practices, then Tamburlaine is an atheist on several scores. He deifies himself and implies he is a god who has supplanted all the other gods, Mahomet included. And yet, he pledges himself to the service of the "highest God". Moreover, Tamburlaine, as an idol, poses as the "note" and "figure" of the eternal majesty and suggests some degree of identification of himself with the highest God as his Wrath and Scourge. A confusion of divine attributes of this kind in his own person would be enough to qualify Tamburlaine as an atheist according to the teaching of the Geneva Bible. Secondly, the divine nature implied in the word "Jove" is not always clear. Thus, in this word can

be read the reality of the true God or the imaginary figure of the mythological god. Tamburlaine identifies himself as the Wrath or the special agent of each in turn, that is, of the true God and of the idol. This ambiguous combination of God and idols in the same term and in the same person amounts to mixing God with the gods, a practice again severely condemned by the teaching of the Bible. This dualism in Tamburlaine would explain how the hero seems to be living a dream which would be totally acceptable only in a mythological world. Like a dream, he seems to vanish into nothingness hovering in space between the regions of the gods and the earth, going neither to heaven nor to hell but left somewhere between the two. In addition to this, Tamburlaine in several instances, draws elements from various sources to explain his religious theories. His description of Zenocrate's heaven is such an example in which he mixes Christian and Moslem beliefs to picture Zenocrate's heavenly abode. The Moslem practice of drawing upon Christian beliefs to develop the tenets of their faith was strongly objected to by Christians. In fact this habit was the subject of some of the most bitter criticisms made about the Islamic faith. Thus, Marlowe, probably deliberately so, does not present a hero untainted by evils of the kind which would provoke an outcry of indignation from his contemporaries. Nevertheless, this "atheistic" aspect of Tamburlaine would not ban him from a place analogous to that of the Biblical tyrants who acted as God's Scourges in the history of the chosen people.

Another observation which may be made is that the play appears to be structured along the patterns set by the morality play tradition. Similar patterns have been detected in the structures of Doctor Faustus and The Jew of Malta. In the same way that Barabas has been recognized as a personification of the vice of covetousness, so does Tamburlaine appear to be a personification, even an incarnate image of the Wrath of God expressing himself in deeds proper to a scourge. Tamburlaine identifies himself as the "Wrath of God" and Marlowe's development of Tamburlaine's identity in this respect has

been analysed. Thus, in the same way that the dramatist has drawn upon Biblical thought patterns to illustrate his hero, so does he seem to have borrowed elements from the medieval tradition to structure a setting for the metaphorical role of his hero.

The overall picture of the play shows up what has been analysed in this study as against what there is left to explore. The Tamburlaine-God relationship has been examined as well as the Tamburlaine-Mahomet one. Little has been said, however, about the array of mythological deities which people the world of Tamburlaine. Judith Weil is perplexed by Marlowe's multitude of gods, monsters and apocalyptical figures in this play.[11] As the gods and goddesses of the Greek and Roman world are symbolic and dynamic representations of human passions, one senses that their role in this play is more than just to be literary devices used for ornamental purposes. Moreover, the Christian habit of deriving parallels between these pagan gods and Biblical heroes was already a long-standing one. It is possible that a thorough study of the place and identity of these gods, as they were perceived within the framework of the Christian tradition, and of the dramatic use Marlowe makes of these deities might yield new insights into the character of Tamburlaine and perhaps into the play as a whole. The freedom with which some preachers alluded to these divinities to explain some doctrinal points would suggest that they were more than just pagan representations of human passions at work.

Another area awaiting an investigation is the religious significance of the phenomena of nature present in Marlowe's Tamburlaine. There is an unusual amount of allusions to nature in this play. One must keep in mind that the God presiding over this play was one "From whom the thunder and the lightning breaks" (2T.5.1.183). Marlowe seems to make more of these

---

11 - See Weil, op.cit., n. 3, p. 105.

phenomena of nature than just illustrations of material cause and effect. They are expressions of divine moods. To say that the purpose of Marlowe's allusions to nature is to extend the presence of Tamburlaine into cosmic dimensions is perhaps to oversimplify the matter. In general, Renaissance literature implies that the workings of the elements in nature are signs of God's approval or discontent with the deeds of humanity. The practice of interpreting phenomena of nature as expressions of God had its roots in Biblical literature. One may assume that the presence of nature in the play fulfils a role other than a purely ornamental one. However, these points would require an examination beyond the scope of this study.

Finally, this analysis is centred on the ideas around which the play is structured. Regrettably, the dramatic and literary devices which Marlowe uses as a medium through which he communicated his ideas have not been analysed. In order that the approach used in this analysis be complete, and that the role of Tamburlaine and his stage colleagues be adequately assessed, the role of pagan deities and of nature in the literary and dramatic contexts created by Marlowe would have to be subjected to a close scrutiny inasmuch as they are part of the religious elements of this play.

In the meanwhile, one realizes that Biblical elements clarify the presence of the Moslem elements in the play, help to define the character of the hero and make the action of the play meaningful. In short, the religious elements of the play act as principles of meaning and coherence in Tamburlaine. Further study would probably yield new insights into the workings of Marlowe's mind by defining more clearly who Tamburlaine is and what he tries to do. The place of the hero as set against the presence of God, of Mahomet, of the pagan gods and of nature, all of which are elements of the overall structure of the play, might point to specific traits of the hero and of the play. These in turn might yield the secret of Marlowe's aims in creating Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God as he did.

APPENDIX A

PARALLELS BETWEEN KNOLLES'S MAHOMET II AND MARLOWE'S TAMBURLAINE.

Here is how Knolles describes Mahomet II who, for his many victories, was called "the Great". At 21, in 1450, he became a Moslem after being brought up as a Christian. He was a man "abhorring the Christian, but indeed making no great reckoning either of the one or of the other but as a meere Atheist, deuoid of all religion, and worshipping no other god but good fortune, derided the simplicity of all such as thought that God had any care or regard of worldly men, or of their actions: which graceless resolution so wrought in him, that he thought all things lawfull that agreed with his lust, and making conscience of nothing, kept no league, promise, or oath, longer than stood with his profit or pleasure".[1] Was this model from which Marlowe drew his inspiration for the creation of his Tamburlaine, a stage character notorious for his atheism, at least in the minds of several critics, devoid of religion, placing his fate in his hands or on the side of fortune guided by the stars, deriding the power of prayer, and having no code of morality except that of his own ambitions?

The Mahomet-Irene idyll was also a subject of interest in Marlowe's days.[2] This Irene in many ways recalls Zenocrate. She was "of such incomparable beautie and rare perfection, both of body and mind, as if nature had in her to the admiration of the world, laboured to haue showne her greatest skill; so prodigally she had bestowed vpon her, all the graces that might

---

1 - Richard Knolles, The Generall Historie of the Turkes ... (London, 1603), p. 337.

2 - Samuel C. Chew, The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance, (New York, 1937), pp. 479 ff.

beautifie or commend that hir so curious a worke. This paragon[3] was by him that by chance had taken her, presented vnto the great Sultan Mahomet himselfe, as a jewell[4] so fit for no mans wearing as his owne: by the beautie and secret vertues whereof, he found himselfe euen vpon the first view not a little moued".[5] Similarly, Tamburlaine was deeply moved at the first sight of Zenocrate.[6] Mahomet committed Irene to the charge of his Eunuch and sent her away, "so to be in safetie kept vntill his better leisure".[7]

The Zenocrate-Agydas scene was perhaps meant to reveal traits of the Tamburlaine - Zenocrate relationship which recall the Mahomet-Irene one. Agydas implies that Tamburlaine has recently neglected Zenocrate as opposed to his attentions as a shepherd when he first met her.[8] Later, Mahomet took such delight in Irene's perfections that in a short time she became the mistress and commander of "him so great a conqueror".[9] He was "in nothing more delighted, than in doing her the greatest honour and seruice he could."[10] "His fierce nature was...by her well tamed".[11] Tamburlaine also admits that Zenocrate has calmed the fury of his sword "which had ere this been bathde

---

3 - Marlowe says this of Zenocrate: "The onely Paragon of Tamburlaine (1T.3.3.119).

4 - According to Tamburlaine, Zenocrate is "Fairer than rockes of pearle and pretious stone": (1T.3.3.118).

5 - Knolles, op. cit., n. 1, p. 350.

6 - See 1T.1.2.87 ff.

7 - See Knolles, op. cit., n. 1, p. 350.

8 - Agydas tells Zenocrate that Tamburlaine

> (Being a Shepheard) seem'd to love you much,
> Now in his majesty he leaves these lookes,
> Those words of favour, and those comfortings,
> And gives no more than common courtesies. (1T.3.2.60-64)

9 - See Knolles, op. cit., n. 1. p. 350.

10 - Ibid.

11 - Ibid.

in streames of blood, / As vast and deep as Euphrates or Nile" (1T 5.1.437-439). There is this great difference, however, that Tamburlaine does not let his affection for Zenocrate interfere with the course of his military initiatives. In spite of Zenocrate's insistent pleas to spare her father and the people of Damascus, pleas she enforces with the argument of his love for her (1T 4.4.65 ff.), Tamburlaine goes ahead with his plans to destroy Damascus because his honour has sworn to perform this deed (1T 5.1.107). Later he persists in his warfare in spite of Zenocrate's wishes that he should cease (2T 1.3.9-11). This implied comparison was perhaps one of Marlowe's ways of making Tamburlaine greater than had been the great Mahomet II. Mahomet does neglect his "wonted care of armes".[12] His soldiers become critical but hesitate to tell this tyrant "whose frowne was in it selfe death".[13] Similar expressions are used to describe Tamburlaine (1T 2.1.21; 2T 3.5.119; 5.1.23). Mahomet's warriors finally warn him that he is asking for trouble if his soldiers are not employed on the battlefield, for "idlenesse maketh them insolent, and want of martiall discipline corrupteth their manners".[14] The same is happening to the Persian troops in Tamburlaine.[15] Mahomet became distressed, "was at warre with himselfe, as his often changed countenance well appeared: reason calling vpon him, for his honour".[16] Marlowe also makes Tamburlaine undergo the experience of a similar kind of struggle

---

12 - See ibid.

13 - See ibid., p. 351.

14 - See ibid., p. 352.

15 - The Persian soldiers in Tamburlaine

> Now living idle in the walled townes,
> Wanting both pay and martiall discipline,
> Begin in troopes to threaten civill warre.
> (1T 1.1.146-148)

See also 1T 2.2.44.

16 - See Knolles, op. cit., n. 1, p. 352.

between love and honour. He speaks of "a doubtfull battell with /his/ tempted thoughtes" (1T.5.1.151 ff., 174-177). At the end of his life he warns his son: "Let not thy love exceed thyne honor sonne" (2T.5.3.199). Mahomet finally kills Irene in front of his warlords to prove to them that his priorities have been restored in favour of warfare[17] as Tamburlaine does not hesitate to kill Calyphas for similar reasons.[18] In this episode, Tamburlaine once more recalls Mahomet II in similar circumstances. At one point in his life, Mahomet II orders that Mustapha, one of his three sons, be strangled for his wanton ways at the court.[19] Tamburlaine's son Calyphas keeps away from the battle scene in favour of similar interests; these are suggested in the dialogue Calyphas holds with his servant Perdicas (2T.4.1. 59-75). Mahomet's reasons for the death of Irene and Mustapha are combined in Tamburlaine's justifications for slaying Calyphas.

Finally, Mahomet can be summed up as a man "most perfidious, ambitious aboue measure, and in nothing more delighted than in blood. (...) His least displeasure was death"[20] so that he lived feared of all men. Tamburlaine admits that his honour consists in shedding blood (1T.5.1.477): his kindled wrath must be quenched with blood (1T.4.1.56) and his displeasure means death as Agydas (1T.3.2.) and Calyphas (2T.4.1.) learn to their own detriment. Furthermore, Tamburlaine is consistently referred to as "the terror of the world" from the beginning of the play through to the end (1T.1.2.38; 3.3.45; 2T.2.1.15; 4.1.154, 200; 5.3.45). Finally, it may be noted that Mahomet II usually had a group of "Mahometan priests going about the army."[21] Marlowe

---

17 - See ibid., p. 353.

18 - See 2T.4.1.120.

19 - See Knolles, op. cit., n. 1, p. 411.

20 - See Knolles, op. cit., n. 1, p. 433.

21 - See ibid., p. 426.

does not associate the priests of Mahomet with Tamburlaine but rather with Bajazet (1T.4.2.2-4).

The numerous similarities, not all pointed out by any means, in the characters and the careers of Mahomet II and Tamburlaine, in the language and style of Knolles throughout his book and those of Marlowe, in the several topics which seemed to be of interest to both Knolles and Marlowe: all these points once more raise many questions about the influence of one upon the other and vice versa. Unfortunately, this enigma must be left as such, at least for the time being.

APPENDIX B

KNOLLES'S VARNA INCIDENT AND MARLOWE'S ORCANES–SIGISMUND EPISODE.

This scene in Tamburlaine. in which Sigismund is persuaded by Frederick and Baldwin to break the truce with the Turks, was taken from the account of the Varna incident either as related by Bonfinius[1] or as translated by Knolles.[2] In the words of Knolles, "this was the most honorable peace that euer Christian prince had before that time made with any of the Turkish kings"; it would have been most profitable had it been kept as solemnly as it was made.[3] Vladislaus, the king of Hungary, who made this pledge, is induced to break it by John Paleologus, the emperor of Constantinople, by Francis, the Cardinal of Florence and general of the Christian fleet, and by Julian, the Cardinal Legate and agent of the great bishops and of the confederate Christian princes.[4] Besides the argument that a league with the Turks necessarily violated the previous ones made with other Christian powers and that a simultaneous allegiance to both Turks and Christians was impossible,[5] the reasons used to induce Vladislaus to break his pledge to the Turks, especially those presented by Julian, greatly resemble the ones put forth by Frederick and Baldwin in Marlowe's play to convince Sigismund to do the same.

---

1 - Antonius Bonfinius, Rervm Vngaricarvm ... Decades Tres (Francofvrti, 1581) pp. 451-467.

2 - Richard Knolles, The Generall Historie of the Turkes ... (London 1603), pp. 286-301.

3 - See ibid., p. 289.

4 - See ibid., p. 290.

5 - See ibid., pp. 290-291.

Julian insists on the fact that this opportune occasion to destroy the Turks should not be let by;[6] this sounds very much like Frederick's urgent appeals that Sigismund "Take all advantages of time and power,/And worke revenge upon these Infidels" (2T.2.1.12-13), that he take advantage of the weakened ranks of the Turks (see 2T.2.1.16-21) and overthrow them. Knolles says that, according to the princes involved, had the truce not been made, "the prosecution of that warre so happily begun, would haue beene the vtter ruine and destruction of the Turkish kingdome".[7] Frederick explains that breaking the truce and attacking Orcanes now would discourage the Turks from further attempts of fighting with the Christians (see 2T.2.1.22-26). Julian insists that Christians should not be bound to Turks who are "accounted breakers both of diuine and humane leagues, forsworne men, and traitors vnto all good Christians",[8] who have "neuer kept faith with any",[9] who are "deuoid of all faith and humanitie";[10] Baldwin explains that Sigismund is not bound to "such Infidels,/In whom no faith nor true religion rests" (2T.2.1.33-34), that "the faith which they prophanely plight/Is not by necessary policy,/To be esteem'd assurance" (2T.2.1.37-39) for themselves. Furthermore Julian believes that, against a perfidious enemy, it is lawful for a man to use all forms of cunning and deceit, fraud and craft,[11] that, as Caesar thought, it is lawful

---

6 - See ibid., p. 291.

7 - Ibid., p. 289.

8 - Ibid., p. 291.

9 - Ibid.

10 - Ibid.

11 - See ibid.

sometimes to break the law, not to stand to one's leagues, nor to keep one's faith with those who are known to be faithless,[12] in other words, that a Christian may break Christian laws when dealing with infidels. Baldwin agrees that they "are not bound to those accomplishments,/The holy lawes of Christendome injoine" (2T.2.1.35-36). Frederick later insists "tis superstition/To stand so strictly on dispensive faith" (2T.2.1.49-50), that is, to stand so strictly on a "faith which may be set aside in a particular case".[13] Sigismund recognizes the truth of this argument as he replies: "I confesse the othes they undertake,/Breed litle strength to our securitie" (2T.2.1.42-43). but he still hesitates to go along with these theories and mentions that if Turks are so, Christians should not act like Turks. As a last argument, Julian affirms that to keep faith with the Turks in this case would be a falsified faith, that it would call upon Vladislaus the severe and sharp revenge of God and that nothing is more acceptable to Christ than to deliver the oppressed Christians "from the cruell slauerie and bondage of the Turke".[14] Frederick recalls "What cruell slaughter of our Christian bloods,/These heathnish Turks and Pagans lately made" (2T.2.1.5-6), that should they "lose the opportunity/That God hath given to venge our Christians death/And scourge their foule blasphemous Paganisme"(2T.2.2.51-53), then "surely will the vengeance of the highest/And jealous anger of his fearfull arme/Be pour'd with rigour" (2T.2.1.56-58)on their "sinfull heads" (2T.2.1.58). In history, as in the play, the truce is broken and the battle is fought to the Christians' dismay. One may conclude that the theories about a Christian's loyalty to the

---

12 - See ibid.

13 - John D. Jump, ed., Tamburlaine the Great: Parts I and II (University of Nebraska, 1967), p. 124, n.

14 - See Knolles, op. cit., n. 2, p. 292.

Turks and the attitudes of Christians towards such a pagan nation put forth by Marlowe probably as closely reflected the general attitudes of his Christian contemporaries towards anything Turk as they quite accurately reproduce those accompanying the historical incident of Varna. Marlowe's use of the historical event shows faithfulness to facts and, probably as well, to the expectations of his audience.

Finally, a comparison between Knolles's text of the prayer addressed to God by the Turks in the course of their engagement against the Christian armies with Marlowe's version of Orcanes's pleas in similar circumstances brings out the similarities between the two. The prayer from Bonfinius's account translated by Knolles[15] is paralleled with Marlowe's text as follows:

Cf. "Behold thou crucified Christ, this is the league thy Christians in thy name made with mee: which they haue without cause violated.

and "Take here these papers as our sacrifice
And witnesse of thy servants perjury.
(2T 2.2.45-46)

Cf. "Now if thou bee a God, as they say thou art, and as we dreame,

and "Then if thou be a Christ, as Christians say,
(2T 2.2.39)
and "If thou wilt proove thy selfe a perfect God,
(2T 2.2.56)

Cf. "reuenge the wrong now done vnto thy name, and me,

and "Behold and venge this Traitors perjury
(2T 2.2.54)
and "Be now reveng'd upon this Traitors soule,
(2T 2.2.58)

Cf. "and shew thy power vpon thy perjurious people,

and "Thou Christ that art esteem'd omnipotent
(2T 2.2.55)

Cf. "who in their deeds denie thee their God.

and "But in their deeds deny him for their Christ.
(2T 2.2.40).

15.- Ibid., p. 297.

One point to be noticed is that Orcanes's prayer in Marlowe's play is more emphatically addressed to Christ than the plea in Knolles's version. The word "Christ" appears five times in the course of Orcanes's plea as opposed to once in Knolles's version.

Thus, the arguments used to convince the Christian leaders to break their truce with the Turks are strikingly similar in both texts. Whether Marlowe drew his material directly from Bonfinius or indirectly via Knolles's translation, both Knolles and Marlowe reflect the attitudes of the Christians towards the infidels which were prevalent in those days.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.V.	Holy Bible: Authorized King James Version, C.I. Scofield, ed., New York, 1967.
B.V.	The Bishops Bible, 1572 edition.
C.P.V.	The Common Prayer Book version of the Psalms in the Bishops Bible.
DA	Dissertation Abstract.
DF	Doctor Faustus in Fredson Bowers, ed., The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe, Cambridge, 1973, vol. 2.
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography.
G.V.	The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 edition with an introduction by Lloyd E. Berry, Madison, 1969.
JHI	Journal of the History of Ideas.
JM	The Jew of Malta in Fredson Bowers, ed., The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe, Cambridge, 1973, vol. 1.
MLN	Modern Language Notes.
NQ	Notes and Queries.
OCC	The Oxford Cyclopedic Concordance. London, n.d.
ODCC	The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, F. L. Cross, ed., London, 1966 edition.
OED	Oxford English Dictionary.
PMLA	Publications of the Modern Language Association of America.
RES	The Review of English Studies.
SP	Studies in Philology.
T.H.	The translation from the Hebrew version of the Psalms in the Bishops Bible.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following bibliography contains only the references to which allusions are made in this study or from which material has been quoted. As this study does not involve any textual criticism, only the editions of Tamburlaine which have been used as the basic reference or which have been alluded to are listed. The list of early works includes later translations of early works. Works which were merely consulted are listed in a fifth section.

1 - Editions of Marlowe's Works

Bowers, Fredson, ed., The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe. 2 vol., Cambridge, 1973.

Brooke, C.F. Tucker, ed., The Works of Christopher Marlowe. Oxford, 1910.

Dyce, Alexander, ed., The Works of Christopher Marlowe: with Some Account of the Author and Notes. London, 1859.

Ellis-Fermor, U.M., ed., Tamburlaine the Great in Two Parts. London, 1930.

Harper, J.W., ed., Tamburlaine. (The New Mermaid Series), London, 1971.

Jump, John D., ed., Tamburlaine the Great: Parts I and II. (Regents Renaissance Drama Series), University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1967.

Ribner, Irving, ed., Christopher Marlowe's 'Tamburlaine', Part One and Part Two: Text and Major Criticism. New York, 1974.

2 - Scriptures

The Bishops Bible, 1572 revised edition of the original one of 1568.

The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 edition, with an introduction by Lloyd E. Berry, Madison, 1969.

Holy Bible: Authorized King James Version. C.I. Scofield, ed., New York, 1967.

The Koran, translated from the Arabic by J.M. Rodwell, with an introduction by G. Margoliouth, (An Everyman Paperback), London, 1974 reprinted edition.

3 - Early Works

Anon, The Svmme of Christian Religion: Comprehended in sixe principal Questions, seruing for instruction of the simpler sort. London, 1617.

Abbot, George, An Exposition vpon the Prophet Ionah. Contained in certaine Sermons, preached in S. Maries Church in Oxford. London, 1600.

Abbot, Robert, A Mirrour of Popish Svbtilties: Discouering sundry wretched and miserable euasions and shifts ..., London, 1594.

_____ The Exaltation of the kingdome and Priesthood of Christ, London, 1601.

Adams, Thomas, The White Devill or The Hypocrite vncased. London, 1615.

Aenius Syluius, Magistrum huius operis libri cronicarum ac figuris et ymaginibus ab inicio mundi. Nuremburg, 1493.

A. M., A Watch-woord to Englande To Beware of traytours and tretcherous practises, which haue beene the ouerthrowe of many famous Kingdomes and common weales. London, 1584.

Andreas à Lacuna Seco, De Origine Rervm Tvrcarvm compendiosa qvaedam perioche. ..., Basileae, 1556.

Ashton, Peter, A shorte treatise vpon the Turkes Chronicles. compyled by Paulus Iouius byshop of Nucerne. .... translated out of Latyn into Englysh ..., London, 1546.

Bibliander, Theodorus, Temporvm a condito mundo usque ad ultinam ipsius aetatem supputatio, partitio que exactior ..., Basileae. The dedicatory epistle is dated 1558.

Bizarus, Petrus, Rervm Persicarvm Historia, Initia Gentis, Mores, instituta, resque gestas ad haec vsque tempora complectens: ..., Francofvrti, 1601. The preface is dated February, 1583.

Bonfinius, Antonius, Rervm Vngaricarvm ..., Francofvrti, 1581.

Chalcondylas, Laonicus, De origine et rebvs gestis Tvrcorum Libri Decem. ... Basileae. The preface is dated February, 1556.

Darby, J., The History of Timur-Bec, Known by the Name of Tamerlain the Great, Emperor of the Moguls and Tartars: Being An Historical Journal of his Conquests in Asia and Europe. Written in Persian by Cherefeddin Ali, Native of Yezd, his Contemporary. Translated into French by the late Monsieur Pétis de la Croix, ..., 2 vol., London, 1723.

Davy, Major William, Institutes Political and Military. Written originally in the Mogul Language, by the great Timour improperly called Tamerlane; First translated into Persian by Abu Taulib Alhusseini; and thence into English ..., Oxford, 1783.

de Belle-Forest, François, Harengves Militaires, et concions de princes, capitaines, embassadevrs, et avtres manians tant la guerre que les affaires d'Estat. ... Recueillies et faictes Françoyses. Paris, 1573.

de Clavijo, Gonzalez, see Le Strange.

de Girard, Bernard, L'Histoire de France. Paris, 1576.

de Vigenere, Blaise, L'Histoire de la Decadence de l'Empire Grec. et establissement de celvy des Turcs; Comprise en dix liures par Nicolas Chalcondyle, Athenien. Paris, 1584.

Drechslerius, Wolfgangus, De Saracenorvm et Tvrcorvm Origine et Rebvs Gestis Chronicum. Basileae, 1555.

du Bec, Jean, Abbe de Mortemer, Histoire dv Grand Emperevr Tamerlanes, ov sont descrits rencontres, escarmouches, batailles, sieges, assauts, ... Tiree des Monumens antiques des Arabes. ..., Rouen, 1595.

_____ The Historie of the Great Emperovr Tamerlan. Wherein are expressed encounters, skirmishes, battels, sieges, assaults, skalings, taking of cities and strong places, defended, and assaulted, ... Drawen from the auncient Monuments of the Arabians, by Messire Iean du Bec, Abbot of Mortimer. Newly translated out of French ... for their benefite which are ignorant in that language by H.H., London, 1597.

Dvbravius, Iohannis, Historia Boiemica. A CL.V. Thoma Iordano Medico nouis Genealogiarum, Episcoporum, Regum, Ducum Catalogis, necessariis quinetiam Annotationibvs sic ornata et illustrata, vt nunc domum edita dici possit. Basileae, 1575.

Dyke, Ier., A Covnterpoyson against couetousnesse, in a Sermon preached at Pauls Crosse, May 23, 1619. London, 1620.

Echialle Mufti, Religion ou Theologie des Turcs. Bruxelles, 1707.

Egnatius, Ioannis Baptista, De origine Turcarum. ..., Basileae, 1556.

Fischel, Walter J., Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane: Their Historic meeting in Damascus, 1401 A.D. (803 A.H.): A Study Based on Arabic manuscripts of Ibn Khaldun's 'Autobiography', with a translation into English, and a commentary. Los Angeles, 1952.

Fortescue, Thomas, The Forests or Collection of Histories, no lesse profitable, then pleasant and necessarie, dooen out of Frenche into Englishe, ...,London, 1571.

Fregosius, Exempla virtvtvm et vitiorum, atque etiam aliarum rerum maxime memorabilivm, fvtvra lectori supra modum magnus Thesaurus. Historicas conscripta, per authores qui in hac scriptorvm classe, ivdicio, doctrina et fide apud Graecos et Latinos praestantissimi habentur: ..., Basileae. The preface is dated 1555.

Gardiner, Richard, A Sermon Preached at St. Maries in Oxford on Act Sunday ... in 1622. Oxford, 1622.

Gruget, Claude, Les Diverses Lecons de Pierre Messie, Gentilhomme de Sévile. Avec trois Dialogues du dit auteur, contenans variables et memorables histoires, mises en François. Lyon, 1577.

Guagninius, Alexandrus, Sarmatiae Evropeae Descriptio, qvae regnvm Poloniae, Litvaniam, Samogitiam, Rvssiam, Massoviam, Prvssiam, Pomeraniam, Livoniam, et Moschoviae, Tartariaeqve partem complectitur. Spirae, 1581.

Hayton, Iean, Les fleurs des histoires de la terre dorient Compillees par frere Hayton seigneur du Cort et cousin germain du roy Darmenie par le commandement du pape.... Paris, 1501?

Horne, Robert, Of the Rich Man and Lazarvs. London, 1619.

Iovius, Pavlvs, Opera qvotqvot extant omnia. Amendis accurate repurgata, vivisque imaginibus elegenter et opportune suis locis illustrata. Basileae, 1578.

_____ Elogia Virorum bellica virtute illustrium. ..., Basileae, 1596.

King, Henry, A Sermon preached at Pavls Crosse, the 25. of November 1621. London, 1621.

_____ A Sermon of Deliverance Preached ... on Easter Monday, 1626. London, 1626.

King, John, A Sermon preached in Oxon: the 5. November 1607, Oxford, 1607.

_____ A Sermon preached ... at Oxford, the 24 of March 1608. Oxford, 1608.

_____ A Sermon preached at Whitehall on 5. day of November, ann. 1608. Oxford, 1608.

Knolles, Richard, The Generall Historie of the Turkes, from The first beginning of that Nation to the rising of the Othoman Familie: with all the notable expeditions of the Christian Princes against them. Together with The Lives and Conquests of the Othoman Kings and Emperours Faithfullis collected out of the best Histories, both auncient and moderne, and digested into one continuat Historie vntill this present Yeare 1603. London, 1603.

Le Strange, Guy, Clavijo: Embassy to Tamerlane: 1403-1406. translated from the Spanish, (The Broadway Travellers Series), London, 1928.

Leunclavius, Iohannes, Annales Michaeli Glycae Siculi, qvi lectori praeter alia cognitu iucunda et utilia, Byzantiam historiam universam exhibent: ..., Basileae, 1572.

Lindsey, Syr Dauid, A Dialogue betweene Experience and a Courtier, of the miserable state of the Worlde, ... , London, 1581.

Lonicerus, Philippus, Chronicorvm Tvrcicorvm, In cuibus Tvrcorvm Origo, Principes, Imperatores, Bella, Praelia, Caedes, Victoriae, Reique Militaris Ratio. .... Tomvs Primvs continet ... Liber I - Turcarum origo, Principes et Imperatores, ... Liber II - Mahometicae Leges, Religio, vita: ..., Francoforti ad Moenvm, 1578.

Mathiae A' Michovia, Polonicae Historiae Corpvs: Hoc est Polonicarvm rervm Latini: recentiores et veteres scriptores, quotquot extant, uno volumine comprachensi omnes, ... Basileae, 1582.

N. N., A Catechisme Composed according to the order of the Catechisme in the Common Prayer 'Booke' containing A Briefe Exposition of I - The Creed, II - The Ten Commandements, III - The Lords Prayer, IV - The Sacraments, London, 1631 edition.

Morton, Thomas, A Preamble vnto An Incovnter with I.R. the Avthor of the deceitfull Treatise of Litigation: Concerning the Romish doctrine of both in question of Rebellion and of Aequivocation ... London, 1608.

Newton, Thomas, A Notable Historie of the Saracens, Briefly and faithfully descrybing the originall beginning, continuance and successe aswell of the Saracens, ... London, 1575.

Nicholay, Nicholas, The Nauigations, peregrinations and voyages, made into Turkie by Nicholas Nicholay ... Translated out of the French by T. Washington the younger, London, 1585.

Palmierus, Matthaeus, En damvs Chronicon divinvm plane opvs eruditissimorvm avtorvm, repetitvm ab ipso mvndi initio, ad annvm vsqve salvtis M.D.XL., Basileae, 1529.

Panke, Iohn, The Fal of Babel. By the confusion of tongues, directly proving against the Papists of this, and former ages: ..., Oxford, 1608.

Perondinus, Petrus, Magni Tamerlanis Scytharum Imperatoris vita, Basileae, 1556.

Pétis de la Croix, Histoire de Timur-Bec connu sous le nom du grand Tamerlan, empereur des Mogols et Tartares. En forme de

Journal Historique de ses Victoires et Conquêtes dans l'Asie et dans l'Europe. Écrite en Persan par Cherefeddin Ali, natif d'Yezd, Auteur contemporain. 4 vol., Paris, 1722.

Platine, Baptiste, Les Vies faictz et gestes des sainctz peres, papes, empereurs Et Roys de France, Ensemble les Heresies, Sciasmes, Concilles, Guerres et autres choses dignes de memoire, aduenues tant en la Chrestiente que autre pays estrange, et Barbare durant le regne dung chascun diceulx, Escriptes en Latin par Baptiste Platine de Cremonne, et depuis tournees en Françoys. Paris, 1544.

Ralegh, Sir Walter, Kt., The Life and Death of Mahomet. The Conquest of Spaine Together with the Rysing and Ruine of the Sarazen Empire. London, 1637.

Ratliffe, Thomas, A Short Svmme of the whole Catechisme wherein the question is propounded and answered, for the greater ease of the common people and Children. ...; London, 1619.

Richerius, Christophorus, De origine Turcarum et Othomani successorumque .... Basileae, 1550.

Saguntinus, Nicolaus Evboicus, De origine et rebvs gestis Tvrcarvm ..., Basileae, 1556.

Sanders, J.H., Tamerlane or Timur the Great Amir. From the Arabic Life by Ahmed Ibn Arabshah. London, 1936.

Schiltberger, Johann, see Telfer.

Shute, John, Two very notable Commentaries the one in 4 bookes of the Originall of the Tvrcks and Empire of the house of Ottomanno, written by Andrewe Cambine, ..., translated oute of Italian into Englishe by John Shute. London, 1562.

Sparke, Thomas, A Brotherly Perswasion to Vnitie, and Vniformitie in ivdgment, and Practise touching the Receiued and present Eccesiasticall /sic/ gouernment, and the authorised ritos and ceremonies of the Church of England. London, 1607.

Stewart, Major Charles, The Mulfuzat Timury, or Autobiographical Memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Timur, written in the Jagtay Turky Language, turned into Persian by Abu Talib Hussyny, and translated into English by Major Charles Stewart. London, 1830.

Telfer, J. Buchan, ed., The Bondage and Travels of Johann Schiltberger, a native of Bavaria, in Europe, Asia, and Africa, 1396-1427. London, 1879.

Vattier, Pierre, L'Histoire Mahometane ov les quarante-neuf Chalifes dv Iscine ..., Paris, 1657.

_____ L'Histoire dv Grand Tamerlan divisée en sept livres. Contenant l'origine, la vie, et la mort de ce fameux Conquerant, Nouvellement traduite en François de l'Arabe d'Achamed fils de Gueraane. ..., Paris, 1658

_____ Portrait dv Grand Tamerlan, avec la svite de son histoire iusques à l'establissment de l'Empire du Mogol. ..., Paris, 1658.

Whetstones, George, The English Myrror. A Regard Wherein al estates may beholde the Conquests of Envy: Containing ruine of common weales, murther of Princes, cause of heresies, and in all ages, spoile of deuine and humane blessings, vnto which is adioyned, Envy conquered by vertues. ..., London, 1586.

Woodcoke, Richard, A Godly and Learned Answer, To a lewd vnlearned Pamphlet: Intitvled, A few, plaine and forcible Reasons for the Catholike Faith, against the Religion of the Protestants. London, 1608.

Zonara, Ioannis, Compendium Historiarum, in tres Tomos distinctum: ..., Tertius, Imperatorem res gestas, a Constantino Magno vsque ad obitum Alexii Commeni. ..., Basileae, 1557.

4 - General Background

Anawati, G.-C., Mystique Musulmane: Aspects et tendances - Experiences et Techniques. Paris, 1961.

Arnold, Thomas W., The Islamic Faith. (Benn's Sixpenny Library, No. 42), London, 1928.

_____ Bihzad and His Paintings in the 'Zafar - Namah' MS., London, 1930.

_____ The Old and New Testaments in Muslim Religious Art. London, 1932.

Bakeless, John, The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe. 2 vol., Cambridge, Mass., 1942.

Barthold, V.V., Four Studies on the History of Central Asia. translated from the Russian by V. and T. Minorsky, 3 vol., Leiden, 1956, 1958, 1962.

Battenhouse, Roy W., Marlowe's 'Tamburlaine': A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy. Nashville, 1941.

_____ "Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God", PMLA 56 (1941), pp. 337-348.

Boas, Frederick S., Marlowe: a Biographical and Critical Study. Oxford, 1940.

Brooks, Harold F., "Marlowe and Early Shakespeare" in Morris, ed., pp. 65-94.

Bruce, F.F., The English Bible: A History of Translations from the Earliest English Versions to the New English Bible. London, 1970.

Chew, Samuel C., The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance. New York, 1937.

Costello, William T., The Scholastic Curriculum at Early Seventeenth-Century Cambridge. Cambridge, Mass., 1958.

Curtis, M.H., Oxford and Cambridge in Transition, 1558-1642: An Essay on Changing Relations between the English Universities and English Society. Oxford, 1959.

Dick, Hugh G., "Tamburlaine Sources Once More", SP 46 (1949), pp. 154-166.

Eccles, Mark, Christopher Marlowe in London. Harvard Studies in English, X , Cambridge, Mass., 1934.

Fieler, Frank B., 'Tamburlaine, Part I' and Its Audience. University of Florida Monographs. Humanities. No. 8, Gainesville, Florida, 1962.

Fisch, Harold, Jerusalem and Albion: The Hebraic Factor in Seventeenth-Century Literature. London, 1964.

Ford, Boris, ed., The Age of Shakespeare. (The Pelican Guide to English Literature). Penguin Books, 1971.

Freeman, Donald Cary, "'Brave to Be a King': A Stylistic Analysis of Christopher Marlowe's Dramatic Poetry", Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Connecticut, (DA 26, 5411), 1965.

Gardet, Louis, La pensée religieuse d'Avicenne (Ibn Sina). Paris, 1951.

_____ Dieu et la destinée de l'homme. Paris, 1967.

Greenslade, S. L., ed., The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day. Cambridge, 1963.

Guillaume, Alfred, The Traditions of Islam: An Introduction to the Study of the Hadith Literature. Oxford, 1924.

_____ Islam. Penguin Books, 1977 edition.

_____ The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ishaq's 'Sirat Rasul Allah' , Lahore, 1967 reprinted edition.

Hamidullah, Muhammad, Le Prophète de l'Islam. Paris, 1959.

Henderson, Philip, Christopher Marlowe. London, 1952.

Hookham, Hilda, Tamburlaine the Conqueror. London, 1962.

Izard, Thomas C., "The Principal Source for Marlowe's Tamburlaine", MLN 58 (1943), pp. 411-417.

James, Montague Rhodes, The Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover. Cambridge, 1903.

Kantorowicz, Ernst H., The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology. Princeton, 1957.

Keller, Werner, The Bible as History. New York, 1956.

Kocher, Paul H., Marlowe: a Study of his Thought, Learning, and Character. New York, 1946.

Kristeller, Paul Oskar, The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino, translated into English by Virginia Conant, New York, 1943.

Lamb, Harold, Tamerlane, The Earth Shaker. London, 1929.

Lefranc, Pierre, Sir Walter Ralegh, écrivain: l'oeuvre et les idées. Paris, 1968.

Levi, Peter, The English Bible: 1534-1859. London, 1974.

Macdonald, Duncan Black, Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory. London, 1903.

_____ The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam. (Haskell Lectures on Comparative Religion in the University of Chicago, 1906), Chicago, 1912 reprinted edition.

Mackie, J.D., The Earlier Tudors: 1485-1558. Oxford, 1962 reprinted edition.

MacLure, Millar, The Paul's Cross Sermons: 1534-1642. (University of Toronto Department of English Studies and Texts, No. 6), Toronto, 1958.

Mâle, Emile, L'Art religieux de la fin du Moyen âge en France: étude sur l'iconographie du Moyen âge et sur ses sources d'inspiration. Paris, 1949.

Margoliouth, D.S., Mohammed. London, 1939.

Merchant, W. Moelwyn, "Marlowe the Orthodox" in Morris, ed., pp. 177-192.

Morris, Brian, ed., Christopher Marlowe. (Mermaid Critical Commentaries), London, 1968.

Muir, Kenneth, "Changing Interpretation of Shakespeare" in Ford, ed., pp. 282-301.

Mullinger, James Bass, The University of Cambridge from the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535. Cambridge, 1873.

_____ The University of Cambridge from the Royal Injunctions of 1535 to the Accession of Charles the First. Cambridge, 1884.

Mulryne, J.R., and Stephen Fender, "Marlowe and the 'Comic Distance'" in Morris, ed., pp. 47-64.

Neale, J.E., Queen Elizabeth. London, 1934.

Nicholson, Reynold Alleyne, Studies in Islamic Mysticism. Cambridge, 1921.

Page, R.I., "Christopher Marlowe and the Library of Matthew Parker", NQ 24 (1977), pp. 510-514.

Palmer, D.J., "Marlowe's Naturalism" in Morris, ed., pp. 151-175.

Pine, Martin, "Pomponazzi and the Problem of 'Double Truth'", JHI 29 (1968), pp. 163-176.

Poirier, M., Marlowe. London, 1968 edition.

Rickey, Mary E., "Astronomical Imagery in Tamburlaine". Renaissance Papers. Durham, N.C., 1954, pp. 63-70.

Rodinson, Maxime, Mohammed. translated from the French edition of Mahomet (1961) by Anne Carter, Penguin Books, 1976 reprinted edition.

Rosen, Barbara, ed., Witchcraft. (The Stratford - upon - Avon Library 6), London, 1969.

Salingar, L.G., "The Social Setting", in Ford, ed., pp. 15-47.

_____ "The Elizabethan Literary Renaissance" in Ford, ed., pp. 51-116.

Seaton, Ethel, "Fresh Sources for Marlowe", RES 5 (1929), pp. 385-401.

Sidersky, D., Les Origines des légendes musulmanes dans le Coran et dans les vies des prophètes. Paris, 1933.

Sims, James H., Dramatic Uses of Biblical Allusions in Marlowe and Shakespeare. University of Florida Monographs. Humanities. No. 24, Gainesville, Florida, 1966.

Smith, James L., "The Jew of Malta in the Theatre" in Morris, ed., pp. 1-23.

Spence, Leslie, "Tamburlaine and Christopher Marlowe", PMLA 42 (1927), pp. 604-622.

Steane, J.B., Marlowe: A Critical Study. Cambridge, 1964.

Sternlicht, Sanford, "Tamburlaine and Interative [sic] Sun-Image", English Record 16 (1966), pp. 23-29.

_____ "The Iterative Sun-Image in Marlowe's Plays: Part II", English Record 18 (1967), pp. 28-35.

Taylor, Henry Osborn, Thought and Expression in the Sixteenth Century. 2 vol., New York, 1920.

Thomas, Keith, Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth- and seventeenth century England. London, 1971.

Tillyard, E.M.W., The Elizabethan World Picture. London, 1943.

Traversi, Derek, "Shakespeare: The Young Dramatist" in Ford, ed., pp. 179-200.

Voegelin, Erich, "Das Timurbild der Humanisten: Eine Studie zur politischen Mythenbildung", Zeitschrift für Offentliches Recht 17 (1937), pp. 545-582.

Watson, Curtis B., Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor. Princeton, 1960.

Watt, W. Montgomery, The Majesty that was Islam: The Islamic World, 661-1100. (Great Civilization Series), London, 1976 reprinted edition.

Weil, Judith, Christopher Marlowe: Merlin's Prophet. Cambridge, 1977.

Weinfeld, Moshe, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School. Oxford, 1972.

Wherry, E.M., A Comprehensive Commentary on The Qur'an: comprising Sale's translation and Preliminary Discourse, with additional notes and emendations. 4 vol., London, 1882, 1884, 1885, 1886.

Wraight, A.D., and Virginia F. Stern, In Search of Christopher Marlowe, A Pictorial Biography. London, 1965.

5 - Works Consulted

Brown, Raymond E., S.S., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm., eds., The Jerome Biblical Commentary. vol. 1 - The Old Testament and vol. 2 - The New Testament and Topical Articles, London, 1968.

Chambers, E.K., The Elizabethan Stage. 4 vol., Oxford, 1923.

Cross, F.L., ed., The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. London, 1966 edition.

Cunliffe, John W., ed., The Complete Works of George Gascoigne. 2 vol., Cambridge, 1907, 1910.

Foakes, R.A., and R.T. Rickert, eds. Henslowe's Diary: edited with supplementary material, introduction, and notes. Cambridge, 1961.

Grosart, Alexander B., ed., The Works in Verse and Prose Complete of Right Honourable Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, 4 vol., London, 1870.

_____ The Works of Gabriel Harvey. 3 vol., London, 1884, 1884, 1885.

McKerrow, Ronald B., ed., The Works of Thomas Nashe. 3 vol., Oxford, 1966.

Oldys, William, and Thomas Birch, eds., The Works of Sir Walter Raleigh, Kt., 8 vol., The History of the World. vol. 2, Oxford, 1829.

Prothero, G.W., ed., Select Statutes and other Constitutional Documents Illustrative of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I. Oxford, 1894.

Ward, A.W., G.W. Prothero and Stanley Leathes, eds., The Cambridge Modern History: The Reformation. Cambridge, 1904.